T.S. Eliot's social criticism and absolute idealism

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T S Eliot's Social Criticism and Absolute Idealism

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Abstract of Thesis

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Title of Thesis **T S Eliot's Social Criticism and Absolute Idealism**

Degree **PhD**

This thesis attempts to show that T S Eliot's social criticism between the years 1916 and 1939 was influenced by Absolute Idealism, especially that of G W F Hegel. Special reference is made in the thesis to the 1939 The Idea of a Christian Society, and also to Eliot's annotations made in 1911 to his copy of Sibree's 1905 English translation of Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. This thesis utilizes these marginalia extensively, it is believed, for the first time in academic study.

I argue that Eliot's conception of society formed around a commonly held idea, the role of religion within society and its rural basis, his stance on democracy, the local, embedded nature of morality, and the notion of an unfolding tradition over time, all have Hegelian roots. I also demonstrate that certain phrases and arguments in his poetry and criticism were borrowed from Hegel, notably in For Lancelot Andrewes and Four Quartets. I explore some of the reasons why Eliot was reticent about his sources for his social criticism, and scrutinise those he did give, notably his contemporaries.

In the thesis, I am mindful of the marked differences between the two authors, seen in such areas as Hegel's concept of *Geist*, and the development of freedom. These divergences are explored. Despite these disparities, there is I believe enough evidence to suggest that Eliot was working with an Hegelian framework in his mind late in his career. These observations, I argue, open a new seam in Eliot studies.

Appendices reproduce all of Eliot's annotations in the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, and give facsimile examples of his notes.

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A Preface

This essay originated in the reading of three books. The first, Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, is probably the most accessible of all Hegel's works, bar his journalism. It deals with the rise and fall of world cultures, tracing the growth in each of what Hegel sees as the principle of freedom. The second, Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society, was published in the shadow of the Second World War, its subject being Christian Society which Eliot saw threatened by Fascism and Communism. It is a good example of Eliot's prose style. It is epigrammatic, circling its subject for a while before making suggestions and comments some of which are razor-sharp and still apposite today. My interest in this text grew over the years, and eventually developed into the wish to study Eliot's social criticism.

The third book, Ricks' edition of Eliot's early verse, Inventions of a March Hare, read as I was preparing for this research, effectively turned this study in another direction and connected my first book with the second. While reading this work, in which Ricks attempts to list as many allusions as possible in Eliot's early poems, I came across two references to Hegel and his text which I had read before. These appear in "Suit Clownesque III", and "The Ballad of Bullshit"[1]. Ricks' notes do not attempt any interpretation of the allusions and focuses mainly on the stylistic influences over Eliot's poetry. On Eliot's "The Ballad of Bullshit", for example, Ricks

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[1] Ricks' notes may be found on pages 173 and 308. Ricks suggests that Eliot's is the first known use of the word "bullshit" in English.

notes that Eliot had written the word "BULL" in the margin in his copy of Hegel's Lectures. This he annotated extensively, and it resides in the Houghton Library of Harvard University. This brought me back to the first book of the three. If Eliot had read and annotated one of Hegel's key texts, and some of this annotating had found its way into his early poetry, was there a case for investigating whether Eliot's other thoughts on Hegel had appeared in his work? And what better text to investigate than The Idea of a Christian Society, which was written around an Hegelian subject - the organisation of society on religious principles?

I discovered Eliot's copy of Lectures littered with underlinings and marginal notes. The question arose: was there any correlation between the gobbets Eliot annotated, and his later work? Had Hegel's ideas about the organisation of society entered Eliot's mind, like the phrases of other authors which Ricks had demonstrated? And what of Hegel's other works? Had Eliot read these and, if so, how could one tell, and what were the consequences in Eliot's writings?

There were some preliminary questions which had to be answered, however. First, Eliot's major philosophical work was to do with Bradley, usually known as an exponent of an Hegelian-derived system. If I were to discover an Hegelian strand in Eliot's thought, might this not come through Bradley? Or might we posit a "double source" theory, that Eliot got his sociological ideas from *both* Bradley and Hegel? Second, Eliot was versed in the work of many philosophers, and the possible influence of their ideas on Eliot's social criticism had to be examined as well. And third, Eliot publicly disavowed the likes of Hegel early in his career, and how could this be squared with any Hegelianism I might discover in the later Eliot? But if I

could discover an Hegelian strand in Eliot, then I knew that our understanding of Eliot's mind would be enlarged significantly. Not only would it put The Idea of a Christian Society into sharper focus, but Eliot's other work too.

This attempt to chart Hegelian ideas in Eliot is the first to do so. Hegel's influence on Eliot has never been recognised before, despite such books as Jain's 1992 T S Eliot and American Philosophy, Habib's The Early T S Eliot and Western Philosophy of 1999, Asher's 1995 T S Eliot and Ideology, Gray's T S Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development 1909-1922 of 1982, Margolis' 1972 T S Eliot's Intellectual Development: 1922-1939 and even Kojecky's T S Eliot's Social Criticism of 1971, which remains the only full-length examination of the subject. Each of these books mentions Hegel, but only in passing. If this examination is seen to be successful, then a significant and fertile new avenue will be opened for Eliot studies. Even if this is not seen to be the case, then this essay will have brought to light a major Eliot text, his annotated Lectures. These have never warranted more than a few lines before. It is my contention that they show much of Eliot's later thinking in nascent form. It is for this reason that I have reproduced Eliot's annotations in full in an appendix; they here are presented for the first time.

Part One: Introduction

Chapter 1. The Thesis

This essay attempts to show that Eliot's social thought between 1916 and 1939 is influenced by the philosophy known as Absolute Idealism, especially that of Hegel. In particular, I will try to show that in Eliot's social criticism the following elements all have Hegelian roots: the conception of society as formed around an idea, the role of religion within society and its rural basis, his stance on democracy, his notion of education, social strata, the toleration of dissenting groups, and the local, embedded nature of morality. I will also demonstrate that certain phrases and arguments in his poetry and criticism were borrowed from Hegel, notably in Four Quartets and For Lancelot Andrewes. Some of Eliot's key notions, such as the unfolding of Tradition, can be shown to have an Hegelian tincture.

I will be mindful, on the other hand, of the differences between the two. Hegel's philosophy centred on the concept of *Geist* and its immersion in history, developing in successive cultures the idea of freedom. Eliot does not appear to have such a framework. *Geist*'s involvement in human history leads to a development within societies, whereas Eliot's conception of society is static. Moreover, Eliot's society appears as more orthodox in its Christianity. Although a definitive conclusion as to Hegel's orthodoxy has not yet been reached, it would be safe to say that Eliot is far more in the mainstream of Christian theological tradition than Hegel, whose philosophy has been accused of pantheism. If we are to accept this thesis, there are

differences to be explored.

The field of study, the (approximately) inter-war period, has been chosen for two reasons. First, it provides a manageable field of study, spanning Eliot's work from his doctoral thesis to the publication of The Idea of a Christian Society. Second, it includes most of Eliot's contributions to political and social thought, including his "Commentaries" in The Criterion (1922 to 1939). The notable exception to this is the 1948 Notes Towards the Definition of Culture, which have been omitted principally because they would make this essay unmanageable. In this study, special reference will be made to The Idea of a Christian Society, which remains perhaps the most neglected of Eliot's major works. It has often been dismissed by critics, such as Spender, whose Eliot said

> Eliot's socio-religious activities make one reflect on how…ineffective the Church…has been in bringing Christian principles to bear on political life.
> (Spender 1975:230)

As Edwards comments, Eliot's "...role as prophet…has not been taken...seriously" (Edwards 1982:9), and this is cause for "scandal", according to Scott (Scott 1994:60). The are several reasons for this being scandalous. Eliot's 1939 book is an interesting period piece, highlighting concerns prevalent in the 1930's; it is also an early appearance of environmental concerns, making Eliot seem uncharacteristically radical; and, with Eliot's concerns about society flourishing as a multi-faith organism, it raises questions which are germane to contemporary thinking.

Auden once suggested that the inspiration for Eliot's poetry came from "...visionary experiences, which…occurred…early in life" (Auden 1965:45). Eliot himself observed a similar pattern when he remarked "...in its sources [my work]

comes from America" (Moody 1994a:4). This essay will suggest a similar provenance for Eliot's social thought in the period 1916-1939. It will be argued that many of the themes in his works of this era were garnered in his philosophical studies between 1909 and 1916. It will be argued that the Absolute Idealist philosophy he encountered never left Eliot and that he thought in these categories well after he abandoned the aim of a professional philosophical career.

The influence of Eliot's philosophical background cannot be underestimated. He was steeped in the traditions of philosophical thought. Nor did Eliot abandon his philosophy as soon as he finished its formal study. The transition from academic philosopher to poet was not abrupt. When he appeared in literary London in 1916, he was a new member of the Aristotelian Society[2], and he was also known primarily as a writer on philosophy. As Kenner observes,

> ...[in 1916 Eliot] made his debut...not as a poet or literary critic, but as [a]...reviewer of philosophic books ...
> (Kenner 1959:44)

During that year, his major work was philosophical. He wrote seven reviews for The International Journal of Ethics, and two for The Monist. This philosophical work continued throughout 1917 and 1918, with reviews and articles in the philosophical press. It was only in 1919 that Eliot ceased to publish philosophical work. His expertise garnered from formal studies so disciplined him in thinking in philosophical categories that he perhaps found it easier making a living as professional philosopher than as poet or critic. In 1916, for example, of his twenty

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[2] He appears as "T. Stearns Eliot, M.A." in the members' list for the years 1916-1917, according to the Society's "List of Officers and Members for the thirty-eighth Session".

one published pieces, only nine were on literary topics (Gallup 1969:197-198). This expertise never left Eliot, although it shall be argued that for various reasons he took some pains to hide it.

Eliot's philosophical career as student and reviewer coincided with the high-water mark of American and British Idealism. His tutors were amongst that school's finest, from Royce in Harvard to Joachim in Oxford. Eliot chose to study that doyen of British Idealists, Bradley. It should come as no surprise, then, to discover that Eliot was steeped in the traditions of Absolute Idealist philosophy which, this essay shall argue, coloured his social thought. We must now turn to a crucial question for our study, what constitutes Absolute Idealist philosophy, especially in its political forms?

Chapter Two. An Outline of Absolute Idealist Philosophy: introduction; Herder; Hegel; Bradley

2.1 Introduction

To outline the whole of Absolute Idealist philosophy in a short chapter is bound to be limited. However, it is the aim to give the main characteristics of the school's way of thinking both in its theory of the nature of reality, the mind and ideas, and also its political philosophy, where it held one, so that we might later see whether Eliot carried Absolute Idealist concepts and categories over into his own thought.

Absolute Idealism is a form of Idealist philosophy. Perhaps the first observation to be made about Idealism is that it is about *ideas* rather than *ideals* and might be better described as *idea-ism*. Ideas and the minds that hold them are fundamental in the Idealist's account of reality, and not so much the world of physical matter. The mind is at the centre of the universe, around which everything else revolves. As Flew succinctly puts it, Idealism is

> ..[a] name given to a group of philosophical theories that have in common the view that what would normally be called "the external world" is somehow created by the mind. (Flew 1979:160)

The world is in a fundamental way somehow mind-dependent, and has no reality until acted upon by some mental faculty. With such a definition, as Rescher suggests, many forms of thought could be considered Idealist - "Doctrines of this sort have been the stock-in-trade of philosophy from...Plato...to Leibnitz" (Rescher

1999:412). However, there is broad consensus that Idealism as generally understood is confined to some of the forms of philosophy which flourished in Europe from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The movement started with Berkeley (1685-1753), "...the first idealist proper..." (Hamlyn 1995:387), and would appear to end as a major force in Western philosophy in the first quarter of the twentieth century after the critiques of such philosophers as Moore, who in 1903 published The Refutation of Idealism.[3] It would seem that scholars differ as to the categorisation of the different types of Idealism. Rescher, for example, defines them around their placement of "the mind" in the world:

> A dispute has long raged within the idealist camp over whether "the mind" at issue...was a mind emplaced outside…nature (*absolute* idealism), or a nature-pervasive power…(*cosmic* idealism), or the collective impersonal social mind of a people (*social* idealism), or simply the distributive collection of individual minds (*personal* idealism). (Rescher 1999:412) [Rescher's Italics]

We might be tempted to conflate Rescher's first and second definitions, if only for our purposes. To this group would belong such figures as Herder and Hegel, Bradley and Bosanquet. Berkeley would belong to the division known as Personal Idealism. Unfortunately, Rescher gives no examples of Social Idealists. Other definitions of Idealism name other categories, such as Transcendental Idealism (espoused by Kant;

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[3] There were of course later exponents of Idealism, such as Collingwood (1889-1943), whom Donagan categorises as Idealist (Donagan 1999:156), and Croce (1866-1952), whose thought Verene calls "…philosophical idealism…" (Verene 1999:196), both of whose work continued until the middle of the last century. There are contemporary defenders of Idealism. Breman, for example, in George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man (1994), suggests that "…Berkeley…was deeper and more hidden…than has been generally recognized" (Breman 1994:vi).

Rescher calls this "ontological idealism" [Rescher 1999:412]), and Critical Idealism, which was Fichte's kind (Hamlyn 1995:387).

It is, however, Absolute Idealism that alone concerns us, for two reasons. First, it was the school in which Eliot was educated in Harvard and Oxford. Second, a focus in this study is Eliot's annotations of one of the key texts in Absolute Idealism, Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of History. Given these reasons, it is appropriate for this essay that we lay aside Personal, Transcendental, and other forms of Idealism and begin by considering what elements of Absolute Idealism constitute a distinctive account of political and social theory, and whether these are absorbed by Eliot.

Absolute Idealism's political ideas are but one strand of many which constitute the philosophy of political obligation. Raphael argues that the theory of obligation revolves around this central idea in politics:

> The authority of the State implies that those who exercise it have the right…to issue orders and the right…to have those orders obeyed, and that, corresponding to the second right, the citizens have a duty…to obey.
> (Raphael 1970:78)

Raphael lists five different accounts of what he terms "...grounds of political obligation":

> 1. The State rests on social contract
> 2. The State rests on consent
> 3. The State represents the general will
> 4. The State secures justice
> 5. The State pursues the general interest or common good.
> (Raphael 1970:85)

The theory of *Social Contract* rests upon an assumption that

> ...human beings would find life in a prepolitical "state of nature"...so difficult that they would agree…to the creation of political institutions that each believes would improve

his lot... (Hampton, J 1999:855-6)

Raphael further divides social contract theory into three forms. The first he terms *Contract of Citizenship*, in which an agreement is made between citizen and State. He cites Plato's Crito as an example, in which

> ...if a man remains in a particular political society and enjoys its privileges, he is bound to accept the obligations also. (Raphael 1970:86)

It appears to be a tacit contract. Raphael's second category, *Contract of Community*, is more explicit. This theory

> ...depicts man as being egotistic, out for himself. Everyone is liable to suffer harm as well as cause it, and so men make an…agreement with each other to set up laws for the regulation of conduct. (Raphael 1970:88)

Into this category would fall Hobbes. For Hobbes the State is necessary to guard the liberty of each person against the depredations of others, and the population agrees to give up some freedoms in order to preserve the rest. People consent to give up their natural freedom (this is a "gift"; there is no "contract" with a sovereign), and present this freedom to a government for their own preservation. Each individual, however, always has the right for self-defence which (although this is moot point in Hobbes' theory) is apparently a guarantee against an over-mighty state. Most commentators (such as Hampton [1999]) also categorise Rousseau as a Social Contractarian, as his The Social Contract suggests. People are, in their natural state, free (Rousseau 1968:49), and bind themselves in larger groups for "...self preservation" (Rousseau 1967:50). The family is the first of these, though Rousseau does comment that it is the "...only natural one..." (Rousseau 1967:50). State and Sovereign are two further levels of society to which the individual contracts.

Raphael's third category of social contract is *Contract of Government*, which appears to be the second refined. In this, there is a "double contract":

> ...men first contract with each other to join in community, and then make a second contract in which they agree to set up a State and obey its laws. (Raphael 1970:91)

Raphael includes the work of Pufendorf in this category, and suggests the community which people agree to join is somehow "natural"; it is the State which is artificial.

The second theory of obligation is what Raphael terms *Theory of Consent*. He considers this as a "...watered-down version of the social contract", as citizens do not contract with the State but assent to its authority (Rapahel 1970:94). Raphael considers Locke's theory in this category, although he does suggest that in Locke there is a

> ...double contract...together with the idea...that the State's purpose is to secure natural rights. (Raphael 1970:94)

Locke's society was more positive than Hobbes', but had ultimately the same goal. In its natural state, human life was "...free from external authority, [and lived] in families and loose groups" (Woodhouse 1995:493). In this state, each person has a duty not to harm the three natural rights which Locke granted to humanity: life, liberty, and property (Locke 1967:270-1). To protect each individual from external force, each agreed to unite and "...enter into society to make one people…under one supreme government" (Locke 1967:325). This government was an arbiter, with power only to "...determine controversies and redress injuries that may happen to any member of the commonwealth" (Locke 1967:325).

The third category in Raphael's scheme is *Theory of the General Will*, and is

where Absolute Idealists are placed. This theory "...make[s] out that our obligation to obey the law is voluntarily assumed" (Raphael 1970:97). Although he sees this theory as "...highly complex and rather obscure" (Raphael 1970:97), Raphael states that

> The view [of Theorists of the General Will] is that we ought to obey the State's laws because they represent the general will. (Raphael 1970:98)

The "general will" is in reality the "common good", and "...not what any particular people want for themselves" (Raphael 1970:99). It might be said that Raphael's description of this theory falls short of the mark. As we shall see in Part Two, Hegel's citizens do not "obey" the State, as this would imply that the State is something beyond themselves. For Hegel, State and citizens were organically linked, and their unity was not a matter of obligation, but more of natural impulse (providing that political education had been successful). This version of political obligation we might term "organic", for it is by joining together to form a larger organism of the State that people develop into their human potential. Unlike the Contract Theorists and the Utilitarians, there is no concept in the organicists' view of society that there is a "pre-political" or "natural" version of humanity that is free. It is only by joining together in communities that people become free. Society is the outcome of a process whereby individuals develop their full humanity.

Raphael's fourth demarcation is *Theory of Justice*. Unlike the first three categories, the fourth (and indeed the fifth) are not based on voluntary association.

Instead,

> They concentrate simply on the purposes of the State and hold that we are morally obliged...to obey the State because

> it is a means to the fulfilment of moral ends which are the objects of obligation for everyone. (Raphael 1970:102)

In the theory of justice, the obligation to the state rests on the justice it secures for its citizens, which everyone is morally obliged to accept. There can be no idea of "contract" here, as this implies choice, and there can be no choice when it comes to justice. Raphael cites the American Declaration of Independence as an example.

Raphael's last category, *Theory of General Interest or Common Good*, he gives to the Utilitarians,

> ...who take the view that all moral obligations depend on their utility for promoting the general happiness. (Raphael 1970:106)

The State is a necessary vehicle for achieving these ends, and its citizens are obliged to join with it to fulfil moral duty. (As Utilitarianism, in category five, did not become predominant in political theory until after Hegel, their inclusion is a little anachronistic, at least for our current purposes).

It was principally against the views of the Contractarian that Absolute Idealism was reacting. Contractarianism emphasised the individual as a unit preceding society, whilst Absolute Idealism in its political theories was *holistic*, a view which reflected its metaphysics. In brief, these can be best described as revolving around the notion of the Absolute, which Allard defines as "...the one independent reality of which all things are an expression" (Allard 1999:3). For Hegel, this Absolute was *Geist*, which embodied itself in the world in order to come to self-consciousness and freedom. Reality being one "thing", the Absolute Idealist's metaphysics was consequently monistic, that is, in McLaughlin's words, it held that "...all reality is really of one kind" (McLaughlin 1999:686). Leading from this monism, the Absolute

Idealists held a coherence theory of truth, in that if a proposition is true it can be related to all truths in one overall system, deriving ultimately from the Absolute.

Therefore it was natural for Absolute Idealists in their political theories (where they held one) to view societies as organic. Individuals *per se* were not autonomous; it was only by bonding together to form groups and eventually states that human beings existed as free persons. The State for Absolute Idealists was the apogee of human life. It was not artificial; it was concordant with human nature. It was not a convenience *by which* individuals could fulfil their individual desires. It was the vehicle *in which* people came to find fulfilment. Nor was the state a collection of institutions or laws, although these were part. The state was the entire population, joined by a common ethos. Instead of a book of statutes and an array of powers, as it was for Hobbes, Locke and the Utilitarians, the state for Absolute Idealists was a kind of universal mind, a shared set of values. The process by which individuals came to possess this mind was education, learned in the development of socialisation which was undertaken in the intermediate groupings which sat between the individual and the state.

2.2. Johann Gotfried von Herder

It would appear that one of the first who contributed to the ideas which later came to be seen as Absolute Idealism was Herder (1744-1803). Herder's political and social views were in some way a reflection of his metaphysics, which started with the nature of God. He views the world not as mechanical systems, regulated by laws, but as an organic system of what he termed powers, or forces, *Kräfte*: "In nature, there

are a thousand forces..." (Herder 1880b:72). God is its "...inner sustaining and organising principle, in virtue of which these *Krafte* constitute a living whole" (Byrne 1989:145).

The human mind is one of these *Kräfte*. Being the same (though lesser) essence as God, the human sphere and God's are not separate. Byrne calls this a "...process of domesticating revelation" (Byrne 1989:145). God and man inhabit the same space; there is one world and God is not outside it; God is the originator and developer of everything. Herder therefore sees the world as unified and organic; it grows and develops as a whole, according to God's will. Herder derived this theory from Spinoza's pantheism, in which God and nature are one.

Moving from the doctrine of God, Herder believed that human beings were created possessing a common humanity. However, this essence was not complete at birth; everyone had to develop into it in order to reach their full potential. This process Herder called *Bildung*, "enculturation", or "education" (Herder 1993:49). Individuals were brought up in the culture of the nation in which they were born. The aim of this development was to achieve what Herder called *Humanität*, the full expression of humanity:

> Human Nature, even at its best...must learn everything, must…advance further through gradual struggle.
> (Herder 1993:40)

This was enabled by the acquisition of *Besonnenheit*, or "reflective mind", in which people achieved self-awareness and freedom to determine their own society: "...man is created for freedom and has no law…but that which he lays upon himself" (Herder 1887a:163). Individuals are in a process of development within

their own cultures, but also, in Herder's thought, humanity itself is in a grand process of *Bildung*. As individuals,

> We grow always as if from childhood...We are always in motion...the essence of our life is...always progression... (Herder 1891:97-98)

but also humanity itself must develop via the cultures in which individuals grow, for

> We develop only that which is occasioned by time, climate, necessity...or accidents of fate... (Herder 1993:40)

The goal for humanity, *Humanität*, was to "...enter into the magnificent whole", which Herder suggests is

> ...the theatre of [the] guiding purpose on earth. It becomes...the theatre of God... (Herder 1993:45)

In summary, humans grow into full humanity within cultures which themselves also develop towards fulfilment of God's purposes, who "...is the One who conceives the entire unity of one and all nations..." (Herder 1993:40).

Herder developed his ideas through the study of language and its development, and history. Both history and language, for Herder, develop out of nature. Humanity is part of the natural world and this was in the process of development. In this, Herder "...emphasised the role of language like no other" (Cooper 1999:301). Herder's first work in which this theory is expounded is the 1772 On the Origin of Language. Language, being a synthesis of sensibility and understanding, was both part of the natural and the mental world. As Herder wrote, "...without language man can have no reason, without reason no language" (Herder 1993:67). Language is the expression of thought, and not "...simply outer clothing

for what could exist independently" (Taylor 1995b:92). Thought and language were ultimately the same thing, and in endowing his creature with reason (or, as Herder preferred, "reflective thought"), God did not then have to re-endow humanity with language. It was as part of his nature as any of his organs. Man thus lives, in Taylor's words, "..in the linguistic dimension", and it is this that marks him out from beasts (Taylor 1995b:84).

This theory had consequences beyond linguistics. It had cultural, social and political ramifications. As thought was language-dependent, variations of languages had therefore variations of culture. Different groups of people would think and develop differently. Each language variation would embody cultural differences; people would be formed in accordance with the characteristics of their mother tongue. As Taylor observes,

> Our words have the meaning they have only within the "language games" we play with them, and these find their context in a whole form of life. (Taylor 1995b:96)

Each language group would therefore have a different identity. Every language produced a distinct people, and each people, in Herder's theory of *Bildung*, enabled Humanity as a whole to develop towards its ultimate goal. Herder was to extend this idea into the theory of the *Volk*, the People. The German *Volk*, formed by the German language and with specific German ways of thought, came to occupy Herder's thinking ever after. He sought to salvage German culture from what he saw as domination by France. French, the choice of educated people in Europe, was to Herder's mind perverting the soul of the German *Volk.* With such colleagues as Goethe and Schiller, Herder sought to establish an independent German culture over

and against the French. He saw a paradigm for this movement in the works of Shakespeare, on whom he published an essay in 1773. He called Shakespeare "...the dramatist of a people (*Volk*)" (Herder 1993:157), expressing the characteristics of the English. Literature and art were both the expression of and the forces behind the formation of cultures, and it was language which kept social groups cohesive over time.

History was therefore another element in Herder's philosophy. In the 1774 Yet Another Philosophy of History, Herder argued that "...we should learn to...value the epochs we now despise", recognising that reason and happiness vary from culture to culture, and the rationalist "...illusion that everything is either true or false" should be abandoned. Herder saw that Kant's alleged sole reliance upon reason was false: it was, according to Herder, impossible "...to comprehend how reason can be...the single...purpose of all human culture", to the exclusion of "...heart…blood, humanity, life" (Herder 1993:39). In his 1799 Understanding and Reason: A Metacritique of the "Critique of Pure Reason" Herder argued that language, being both sensual *and* intellectual, denied Kant's dissection of the mind into sensibility and understanding. In humanity's history, the main player was not, as Kant held, reason, but also the organic development of humanity itself. A culture, being a social phenomenon formed by language, was open to influences from other nations and the forces of nature. Herder sought to identify these forces at work in the history of humanity. Herder's man is a person embedded in a cultural and biological whole. Herder created his philosophy of history in his Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind, published between 1784 and 1791. "The principles of this philosophy",

wrote Herder,

> ...are as simple...as the fact that it is a natural history of human beings: *tradition and organic forces*.
> (Herder 1993:83) [Herder's Italics]

Ultimately for Herder the guiding hand of history was God. In his 1774 Yet Another Philosophy of History Herder, in Dahlstrom's words,

> ...describes history as a theatre piece in which all are players in a chain of events that only the divine playwright can oversee. (Dahlstrom 1999:84)

Thus Herder chose to interpret history as one story of development. This applied to human nature as well as the forces of history. Herder wished to balance the uniqueness of each individual person with the dependence that person has upon the larger group within which he is placed. In Herder's view, "He [i.e. the individual] is a microcosm in himself", comments Barnard,

> and yet he cannot exist by himself alone...The problem is to discover a manner in which men can associate without sacrificing their distinct personalities. (Barnard 1968:54)

The solution Herder discovered was the *Volk*, which we saw above was the group formed by a distinctive language. It is into an already existing society that everyone is born. From its origin, all life is social. And as the individual develops, in the process described as "enculturation" (*Bildung*) it is the mores of that particular *Volk* that he or she adopts. There are of course various strata of social group, such as family and region, but ultimately it is the *Volk* which is the primary society. Herder described this as a "...family writ large" (Herder 1993:53). As such, the *Volk* is as natural for humanity as a colony is for bees. To think of human beings as existing apart from a social structure is to think of an abstraction only.

Herder's social theory of the *Volk* is also political. Life in society needs organisation. Government, for Herder, is integral to human nature:

> Man has never existed without political organisation; it is as natural to him as his origin. (Herder 1993:58)

Herder developed a sophisticated theory of the *Volk* state. He asserted that there were five prerequisites for society: a common language; a definite area of land as the *Volk*'s common heritage; the "...law of the constitution, as a covenant freely entered upon"; sub-strata of families and classes, and also "reverence for the forefathers" (Herder 1993:62). There was no need, it seems, for the *Volk* state to have a single sovereign authority wielding political power, as "...the *Volk* state embodied...a pattern of communal life, rooted in history…" (Herder, in Barnard 1993:63).

Given this brief introduction, we might detect correlations between Herder's concerns and Eliot's. Language was important to both. As will be discussed below, Eliot was an observer of developments in English and often attacked what he considered poor language because it would have an impact on the culture in which it was embedded. (This was of particular concern for him over the 1928 proposals for the revision of the Book of Common Prayer). Eliot also had an organicist view of society, which he describes in The Idea of a Christian Society. However, it would be fair to say that Eliot was probably not directly influenced by Herder. This is primarily because of a lack of sources. Herder does not appear to figure in any of his student courses either at Harvard or Oxford. As Bunge suggests, "...much of the secondary literature written in English on the eighteenth century mentioned Herder only in passing..." (Bunge 1993:viii). Few of Herder's works had been translated into English

over the years, and it is unlikely that any were in print during Eliot's student career.[4]

Herder was severely neglected in the early twentieth century, and even now

> ...few of his writings have been translated and fewer still
> have become "required reading".
> (Cooper 1993:301)

To add to this lack of translations in which Eliot might have encountered Herder, he could not easily have studied Herder in German, it can be argued. Eliot's German, I believe, was never proficient enough to cope with a philosophical text like Herder's, which in Eliot's lifetime was only available in German. Herder's prose style has been called "...confusing, even for native German speakers" (Bunge 1993:ix). Eliot's lack of competence can be seen in several areas. In his own works, Eliot rarely quotes in German, and by a perusal of his works it is clear that he is not as acquainted with German authors as he is with French or Italian.[5] Also, although he would review French works in The Criterion, such as Maritain's, he left German

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[4] Bunge lists the following English translations of Herder's work: A Brief Commentary on the Revelation of St John (1821); The Book of Job Considered as a Work of Art (1870); The Divinity and Right Use of the Bible (1857); and The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry (1833) (Bunge 1993:xiii-xiv).

[5] Eliot did quote from Tristan und Isolde in "The Waste Land", and in "Notes" to the poem pointed the reader to a supposed parallel in lines 366-76 to Hesse's Blick ins Chaos (Eliot 1969:77-79). However, there are as many references in these notes to Sanskrit texts. Eliot did claim to have read Spoerri's Die Gotter des Abendlandes, in a letter to The New English Weekly of 12th April 1934 (p. 622). However, this might be misleading, as he was at this point involved in controversy with Pound over After Strange Gods, and the only comment he makes on Spoerri's book is that it "...expresses some of the opinions of "After Strange Gods"." (p. 623). Another piece of evidence *contra* Eliot is his unconvincing rendering of the German lines in his recordings of "The Waste Land". (Professor Elizabeth Daumer, of the University of Eastern Michigan, confirmed this opinion at the 2002 T S Eliot Society Conference). There is a case for suggesting that Eliot quoted in a foreign language more for effect than from scholarship. For instance, the original title of Poems 1920 was Ara Vus Prec, supposedly from Provencal. This was a printing error: the word "vus" should have

reviews to F S Flint. When Eliot did take on board the theories of German writers, such as Hegel, it was in English translation, as far as we are able to tell from the evidence. We have to lay Herder aside, for it is likely that any correlation between

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been "vos". Eliot explained this mistake to Gallup: "The correct title of the book is *Ara Vos Prec.* It only happened to be *Vus* on the title page because I don't know Provencal…It would seem to me that there is no such word…in that language" (Gallup 1969:26). This is significant: although Eliot could claim no proficiency in Provencal, he was still content to entitle one of his books in that language. If he could do this, he was surely capable of doing the same with German. Eliot's disastrous dalliance with Provencal was perhaps an attempt to keep pace with the linguist Pound. Perhaps Eliot's desire to portray himself as a connoisseur of European culture led him to portray himself as more competent than he was. In understanding this we may see more clearly his ability or not in reading such texts as Herder's. I am also indebted to the Cambridge scholar Iman Javadi who presented a paper entitled "Plurilingualism and the "Mind of Europe" in T S Eliot and Dante" at the 2004 T S Eliot Society Conference. He argues that Eliot's German was only elementary, and cites as examples Number 9 of the humorous "Noctes Binianinae", written by Eliot for John Hayward, which contains many elementary errors. Moreover, Eliot's 1948 "German Message" for the issue of "Ariel Poems" in that country was so bad that it had to be corrected by an unknown hand.

Herder's work and Eliot's would come through the mediating mind of our next subject of enquiry, Hegel.

2.3. G W F Hegel

Hegel (1770-1831) was indebted to Herder for many of his ideas, notably the historical dimension in philosophy, the *Volk* and the rejection of the Kantian reliance upon pure reason. In his youth, observes Sabine,

> Hegel's speculation started from Herder['s] idea...of a progressive revelation of religious truth...Before Hegel, Herder had said that Germany had always had...a "fixed national spirit". (Sabine 1963:629-630)

Taylor believes Herder's ideas to be "foundational" for the later German Idealists, especially Hegel, changing the course of German philosophy from the intellectualism of Kant (Taylor 1995c:79). Although Hegel developed Herder's ideas beyond their original limits, Herder remains one of those whose shoulders Hegel stood upon, although in Hegel's own writings this indebtedness is not acknowledged - in Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Herder's work receives scant notice:

> In the writings of Herder and Kielsmeyer [note that Herder does not warrant an entry by himself] we find sensibility...and reproduction dealt with...
> (Hegel 1896:513)

For Hegel, political theory had its origin in metaphysics. The world as we encounter it is what he termed "alienated *Geist*". *Geist*, roughly equivalent in function to Mind or indeed God, in Hegel's system enjoys radical freedom. It determines its own nature; it is an autonomous force. However, in itself it is not complete. It needs to alienate itself, objectify itself (as it is pure subjectivity by itself), and then, by overcoming the opposition it meets in this self-made objectification, return to itself *as* itself - it "...(consummates) itself through its

development" (Hegel 1977:11). The theatre for this working out of itself is the world, of which humanity is a key part.

Hegel regards the development of world history as a dialectical process. We might describe this process in the following way. *Geist* is the starting point for the dialectic of history. By and in itself, *Geist* was not fully developed. It was neither totally self-conscious nor did it enjoy true freedom. It had to act upon another entity in order to come to fulfilment. In order to do this, *Geist* had to alienate and objectify itself and enter into world history at its inception - in Hegel's theory, there is no period in world history in which *Geist* is not embedded. Eliot himself noted the following description of the beginning of this dialectic in the Lectures:

> [*Geist*] in its second phase separates itself from itself and makes this second aspect its own polar opposite, viz. as existence for and in itself as contrasted with the Universal. (Hegel 1905:335-336)

Geist guides each culture in which it is involved towards true freedom - or, in Hegel's terminology, the *Idea*. The nearer freedom is embodied, the nearer *Geist* comes to finding itself reflected back and recognized, and thus closer to self-fulfilment and a return to itself out of alienation. Geometrically speaking, *Geist* works in a spiralling process, proceeding upwards through differing cultures, resting at specific periods and in certain cultures whilst the concept of freedom is developed within them. However, in each culture the Idea eventually meets opposition, either internally such as in the practise of slavery, or externally from conflicts with other nations, and these conflicts *Geist* has to overcome. Sometimes cultures can reform themselves to allow a greater realisation of freedom for their citizens, but ultimately more advanced cultures have to take over the development of history and to these

Geist moves, and the spiralling towards *Geist*'s ultimate goal continues. Such moves Hegel saw in the development of Roman society from Greek, and Christian culture out of Roman. Eliot noted the following example of the dialectic of *Geist* in the following from Hegel's Lectures:

> We have, then, to distinguish three periods in Greek history: the first, that of the growth of real individuality; the second, that of its independence and prosperity in external conquest (through contact with the previous World-historical people); and third, the period of decline and fall, in its encounter with the succeeding organ of World History. (Hegel 1905:233).

When each national culture, each resting place for *Geist*, collapses its successor culture in part builds upon and in part negates the conceptions of Freedom, personhood and nature embodied in it, as when Rome succeeded Greece as the mover in world history. Hegel uses the notion of "*Aufhebung*" to denote this part-negation, part taking-up. Thus history moves upward in a spiral of ever-more adequate expressions of *Geist.*

For Hegel, this dialectical movement is seen across the panorama of history. It involved not just politics, but art, ethics, philosophy, culture and religion. Whatever the movement, however, it was part of the movement of *Geist* in its quest for self-fulfilment. *Geist* to Hegel was not restricted to the sphere of ideas. *Geist* encompasses all that exists, both the subjects who share its qualities and the physical objects upon which it acts. Hegel developed his theory of *Geist* in three principle works, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, The Philosophy of Right, and The Phenomenology of Spirit. It can be demonstrated beyond doubt that Eliot read the Lectures, and there is strong reason to think that he knew The Philosophy of

Right also. However, it appears from the available evidence that Eliot never read Phenomenology. I have been unable to find any examples of cross-references between Phenomenology and Eliot's work. I would suggest that, given the evidence that Eliot had read and absorbed much else of Hegel's oeuvre, and had reproduced ideas and excerpts from these in his own writings, that we are justified in this assertion. There appears, for example, no correlation for Hegel's Master and Slave analogy in the Phenomenology. Therefore I propose in our discussion to concentrate on the first two of these three books.

In the Lectures, Hegel's scheme of history was portrayed on a vast canvas. He thought of the world as being made of groups of people (*Volk*), each possessing a distinctive spirit (*Volksgeist*) as its particular embodiment of *Geist*. Each nation had its own history and development which, when linked together, formed a chain of progress in *Geist*' development. Unlike any other of the works discussed in this section (with the possible exception of Bradley's writings, and even here the evidence, in documentary terms, is thin), it can be shown without doubt that Eliot had knowledge of the Lectures. In 1911 he bought a copy of Sibree's 1905 translation and made notes within it. This being so, the Lectures shall be examined in some depth[6].

Hegel did not set himself to write a work of history as we might understand it, and as its opening words explain:

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[6] Sibree's translation conflated the 1822, 1828 and 1830 drafts of the Lectures. There are a large number of additions made by Hegel and also material added by editors. See Lasson's note in Nisbet's translation of the Lectures, introduced by Forbes (1975:221-227).

> The subject of this [book] is the philosophical history of the world. And by this must be understood not a collection of general observations respecting it...but Universal History itself. (Hegel 1991a:1)

This "Universal History" was the unfolding story of *Geist's* encounter with the world. This Hegel traces from the civilisations of China, India and Persia, through Ancient Greece and Rome to Mediaeval Europe and the Reformation, to the present situation (in Hegel's terms) of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. There was, as Hegel believed, a "...rational process of development" (Singer 1983:10) through history, in which each society helped develop *Geist*. The end of this movement was, in Hegel's words "none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom" (Hegel 1991a:19).

Freedom in Hegelian terms was more than freedom from external influences. It was a radical freedom like that enjoyed by *Geist*. It was "...freedom in the metaphysical sense", as Singer suggests, and had little to do with freedom of speech or movement (Singer 1983:20). It was freedom to live in a world which mirrored *Geist*, in that each person was recognised as an individual consciousness by others who shared the same quality. Freedom can only be achieved when human society can reflect back to its members human nature itself; this was the origin of Hegel's statement that the State is the "...hieroglyph of Reason" (Hegel 1991b:234). This society was organic, with no alienation within; everyone was "at home". This process was that of *Geist* itself, working across human history, developing freedom until humanity reflected *Geist* back to itself.

Hegel's concept of freedom can be understood via his example of Master and Slave in Phenomenology. "The Master", wrote Hegel,

> ...is the consciousness that exists *for itself*...which is mediated with itself through another consciousness, i.e. through a consciousness whose nature it is to be bound up with an existence that is independent...
> (Hegel 1977:115) [Hegel's Italics and capitalisation]

This "other consciousness" is the slave, who is "...the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another" (Hegel 1977:115). The Master-Slave argument may be stated in the following way. Overall, the key concepts which it aims to explain are those of recognition and freedom. As we saw above, freedom was the "Idea" for Hegel, the goal of human history and of *Geist.* For anyone to enjoy freedom, it was necessary for that person to be recognized as free by another person (or entity) who was also free. As Taylor explains,

> …recognition must be mutual. The being whose recognition of me is going to count for me must be one that I recognize as human. (Taylor 1975:153)

This, Hegel explained, was an impossible dialectic for the Master and Slave.

The Master attempts to wrest recognition from his slave. This would apparently be successful: the slave has to be utterly devoted to his master and serve his every whim. The master is therefore apparently free to be whatever he pleases, which quality he believes embodies freedom. However, he deceives himself. For the Master's values and those of his slave are fundamentally different. The master, for example, does not invest the slave with freedom, while he apparently enjoys this quality himself. The slave is forced to devote himself to his master's values, however, and because this is not a free choice, these values can never be the slave's own. There can be no true recognition by the slave of his master, and vice versa; there is only an "external" recognition. What matters is internal recognition, that

given freely. The master and slave remain unrecognised by each other, and as such neither enjoy freedom; neither can become fully self-conscious.

However, the slave, although apparently the disadvantaged one, eventually finds a kind of freedom through the work he is forced to do. In this productive activity, working with what Hegel terms "material reality", he finds his values and worth externalised, and in the articles he produces, he begins to construct a world in which he finds himself reflected. Self-consciousness is the end result, and eventually freedom - servitude prepares the liberation of the slave. The master, in not doing this work himself but having material reality mediated to him through his slave, comes to find himself worse off. The slave finds freedom, whilst the master in one sense becomes a slave to the bondsman:

> ...just as lordship showed that its essential nature is the reverse of what it wants to be [i.e. free and freely recognised as lordship], so too servitude in its consummation will turn into the opposite of what it immediately is; as a consciousness forced back into itself, it will withdraw into itself and be transformed into a truly independent consciousness. (Hegel 1977:117)

Freedom could not be developed in a master-slave relationship, where there was no recognition of the individual consciousness by similar others. This was true for *Geist* and human beings; it was a facet of consciousness *per se*, the potential for which was given to humanity as well as enjoyed by *Geist. Geist*, however, was embarked in a process of developing its consciousness, and had alienated itself into the world in order to do this. And to achieve this, as Hegel suggested in his master-slave image, it had to find a society whose idea of freedom matched its own, so that it could be recognised as *Geist* by other consciousnesses which were themselves conscious.

Geist sought a relationship of equals, and then it could return to itself as *Geist*.

Hegel charted this quest through the epochs of world history. In Part One of the Lectures, he concentrated on the Orient. His characterisation is political rather than geographical, for he included Syria and Egypt with China, India and Persia. Law and morality were externally controlled, and only one person in society could be considered "free", the ruler(s). His subjects had no wills of their own. In China, the Emperor governed every element of the nation, and in India the caste system ensured an external regulation to life. These societies Hegel termed "static", in that there was no development of the idea of freedom.

Persia did provide a start for the growth in freedom, in that the Emperor governed in accordance with a religious code, Zoroastrianism. He was still a despot, but his despotism was legally based. Freedom was further developed when the Persian world came into contact with Greek, at the battle of Salamis. The Greek victory ensured that the development of freedom passed from the despotic orient to a nation in which the principle of freedom was more articulated.

Greece, however, had a restricted view of freedom. Society relied on slavery, and this contradicted freedom. Even those who were free "...had no concept of individual conscience...", in that they could not conceive of themselves as separate from the state; they were not yet "...absolutely free..." and *Geist* "...had not yet advanced" towards its goal (Hegel 1991a:250). To sublate himself to the good of society was not a choice that a Greek could make, and thus he was not free. Greeks relied upon habit rather than volition. In Socrates, however, Greek society made headway in developing freedom. His critical questioning of society led his audience

to reflect on customary morality. Ironically, this led to his death, and ultimately of Greek civilisation too. But Socrates showed the role reason could play in the unfolding of *Geist*, and from the Greeks onward the mental capacity of humanity was to be more important.

Rome took the main role in history from Greece. Although Roman culture was despotic, being held together by force under the Emperor, there was the concept of individuality. The rights of citizens were fundamental, and a legal system had been built around it. This capacity for "individuation" was at the heart of true freedom, for society could only be made of individuals who of their own volition wished to join it by denying their individual rights.

However, the Romans still lacked the fulfilment of *Geist's* quest for freedom. There was a tension between the State and individuality, which was forced into taking refuge in the Stoic, Sceptic and Epicurean philosophies. Freedom was therefore an inward, not outward, disposition. In Christianity, however, freedom was taken a step further. Christianity allowed the growth of "...religious self-consciousness..." in that *Geist* could be known as Spirit, and this became "...the axis on which the history of the World turn(ed)" (Hegel 1991a:319). In the teaching of Jesus, *Geist* found an ally. However, it was to take the whole of Christian history for this precept to defeat the tendency of the Church to decadence. Until the Reformation, Christianity was essentially Roman, based on the structures of government and law of an age in which freedom was not fully developed.

The Reformation ushered in what Hegel confusingly terms "the German world". This was not centred on Teutonic peoples. It was a generic term by which

Hegel seemed to mean "European Protestant", for England and Scandinavia were seen to be part of it. These nations had managed to throw off the "infinite falsehood" of the Middle Ages (Hegel 1991a:366) and saw God as he was, a spiritual being, instead of trying to embody him in the material world, in government and state. This liberation of the idea of God was essential in the development of *Geist*. No external authority was needed in religious life, and individuals became the ultimate judge of truth. Thus the "...all enlightening sun" (Hegel 1991a:412) dawned for the first time in world history. History since, to Hegel, is the unfolding of this principle by the application of reason.

The last phase of world history with which Hegel concerns himself is the French Revolution. Hegel sees the Revolution in two aspects. First, it is a kind of compressed Reformation, achieving quickly in France what it took centuries to do in German nations. In doing away with Church and Monarchy it enabled the growth of freedom. It handed a sense of freedom to the French almost all at once. However, Hegel was not blind to the evils of the Terror, which curtailed these freedoms. *Geist* had to work slowly and carefully, and needed centuries to distil.

This brief outline of Hegel's view of world history cannot provide a critique. To our modern mind, Hegel's system might be seen as at best sanguine and at worst preposterous. The history of the Twentieth Century, it might be said, shows how far the "German Nations" of the world had *not* embodied the idea of freedom as Hegel believed. To Eliot's mind, however, formed in a different age and before the cataclysm of world war, it may have been acceptable.

Hegel's Philosophy of Right was his main treatise on politics, an account of

what he termed "objective Mind", that is, *Geist* acting in the world. In this work, Hegel examined the thesis that virtue and moral behaviour can only be accounted for within society, and not on an individual basis. He was to call this social-moral system *Sittlichkeit*, a complex term which will be discussed at greater length in Part Two. There is a triadic form to society, he argues. The first part is family, the natural group of individuals. The second is where these families come together to constitute civil society, or what Hegel calls "...a system of all-round interdependence...(in)...the external state" (Hegel 1991b:221). This is superior to the family unit, but is only based on need. This society is "external" because there is a sense of it being "out there", or - to use Hegelian terminology - estranged from its constituent units. The family and the civil state are sublated in the third part of political development, what Hegel called the State. In this, there is no distinction between members; the controllers and the controlled are the same, and there is no external imposition of rules or force, only internal. Each individual member submits his or herself willingly to the government of the whole. In Hegel's terms, this is what made true freedom. It was a "...substantial unity" which

> is an absolute and unmoved end in itself, and in it, freedom enters into its highest right… (Hegel 1991b:275)

According to Hegel, the best constitution in which this sublation can happen is a constitutional monarchy. The monarch, in being an individual, represents to the people the characteristic common to all, that is, individuality - "...the most universal element" (Hegel 1991b:313) - but in the aspect of being sublated into a greater whole. This monarchical state was the goal of government in world history. Under the monarch came the executive, consisting of civil servants. The other branch of

government is the legislature in a bicameral parliament. Hegel admired the British system of government[7] and this is expressed in his view that the upper chamber of parliament should be for the landed, and the lower for the business classes. Hegel here does not envisage representation for individuals, but for groups of people bound together by large-scale interests such as a Trade's Union, for individuals truly exist in terms of freedom only when formed into larger groups. This way of organising society was along rational lines. It was the whole which was the real, and to ally oneself to this greater picture was to act reasonably. The greater community provided each individual with the duties of a station and a role, and it was in fulfilling these that freedom was found.

As in Lectures, Hegel took freedom as his central theme in Philosophy of Right. Freedom is something that has to be struggled for, and within a society. Hegel insists that each individual is part of an organic community. In joining with others, individuals sense that their own identity is part of that community. This provides a natural cohesion. Individuals will not work to their own interests, as these interests are those of the group. In sublating one's self to the whole, "I am myself", says Hegel, "I am free", and "I will what is rational" (Hegel 1991b:49). The individual has recognised the source of his being, and has chosen to dedicate himself to community, which ultimately is himself. Society, and world history, were to Hegel the arenas in which *Geist* evolved into self-realisation. Men's minds, in being part of this greater

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[7] In his "Vertrauliche Briefe", he suggested that "...there is no nation in Europe which enjoys greater apparent prosperity...This is because the Englishman is free, because he enjoys the rights inherent in freedom, in one word, he taxes himself", which, according to Hegel, was the benefit of Parliamentary rule (Pelczynski 1964:11).

Mind, developed along with it, as we saw in the outline of the Lectures. In politics, ethics, and art, there is a gradual development of ideas which eventually would lead to total fulfilment of *Geist* itself.

2.4. F H Bradley

In the late nineteenth century, according to Macquarrie, Hegelian Idealism

> ...underwent a remarkable revival…it [became] the dominant type of philosophy... (Macquarrie 1971:23)

Hegelianism flowered in late Victorian Britain, where philosophers such as Bosanquet and Green developed their own Absolute Idealism. They became known as the British Idealists, and prominent amongst them was Francis Herbert Bradley[8].

Bradley (1846-1924) for most of his life was a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. He was a recluse[9], and as his Fellowship did not engage him in teaching, he was able to devote his energy to writing. Bradley's was a controversial style, often aimed against his opponents, particularly Utilitarians.

Bradley is not considered to be a major political philosopher. Apart from Ethical Studies, he did not write on sociological issues, except in two minor essays published in Collected Essays. Moreover, Ethical Studies does not deal head-on with

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[8] There is currently a debate as to whether Bradley was an Idealist. Stock, in "The Realistic Spirit in Bradley's Philosophy" in his Appearance versus Reality (Stock 1998:6), suggests that Bradley was "...realist in intent", in that he postulated an independent reality which could actually be known. This view is contrary to other accounts of Bradley. This essay has taken Acton's line that Bradley was "...the English idealist philosopher" (Acton 1968:1/359).

[9] Eliot, studying at Merton, was never to meet Bradley. According to Wollheim (1959:15), Bradley's reclusivity was due to illness. He was also reputed to shoot cats.

the organisation of society, and its focus is how the *individual* should live. Here, Bradley diverged from colleagues in British Idealism, most of whom wrote explicitly on politics and were also actively engaged in it. As Boucher comments,

> For British Idealists, with a few exceptions, notably Bradley and McTaggart, philosophy was integrally related to practical life and needed to be directed to improve the conditions of society. (Boucher 1997:ix)

Bosanquet, for example, served in the Charity Organisation Society, Caird in The Women's Protective League (Boucher 1997:vi). Bradley, on the other hand, never troubled himself with such activities and Bradley's politics are not even mentioned in Stock's 1998 book Appearance versus Reality: Essays on the Philosophy of F H Bradley.

Bradley's first major work was the 1876 Ethical Studies, described as his "...most Hegelian work" (Sprigge 1995a:100), and its target was Utilitarianism. Bradley took an Hegelian line in suggesting that moral systems must be judged by the criterion of what "self-realisation" they offer. He examines, for example, hedonism, and Kantian "duty for duty's sake". Each system proves self-contradictory, and gives rise to its successor through these contradictions, dialectically. Hedonism is rejected because it seeks pleasure as an end, and not happiness. It dissipates itself in a series of unconnected and individualistic joys. Duty for duty's sake is an advance, as it attempts to provide a universal setting for morality, but ultimately fails because being dispassionate it does not provide satisfaction for its adherents. Bradley then moves to the position "my station and its duties", which appears broadly Hegelian. Indeed, Bradley includes quotations from Hegel in this section. Here morality is not an intellectual abstraction but part of a community of people which itself shapes the

mores of its members, similar to Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*. Each person, according to Bradley, has a certain position or standing in society, be it a Station Master or a Parson. These positions entail certain kinds of relationships with others and therefore ways of behaving. Ultimately, everyone in society is related to everyone else by virtue of their station, and this co-dependence produces a common code of conduct. However, "my station and its duties" fails to satisfy the moral man, for it does not encompass the whole of experience - there are parts of the life of the Station Master, for example, which are outside his duty of keeping a railway functioning and therefore these are outside of the morality which that induces. The ultimate ethic is what Bradley calls "ideal morality", in which in every situation the aim is to realise "the best self". The notion of "best self" may have its origins in the society in which it was born, but it may also develop beyond this by its encounter with other societies and by criticism of its own. The "best self" sees life as unity, not split into series of different experiences as it is in hedonism, and it also sees itself in community. "To be a good man", wrote Bradley,

> ...in all things, to try to do always the best in it…to suppress the worst self and realise the good self, this…is the dictate of morality. (Bradley 1927:215)

In this culmination of morality, Bradley's focus is from the viewpoint of the individual. The "dictate of morality" given above makes no substantial mention of society. The moral individual has a task of paramount importance to perform: the realisation of the "best self":

> It is a moral duty to realise everywhere the best self, which for us in this sphere is an ideal self…morality is…coextensive with self-realisation… (Bradley 1927:219)

Reading Essay VI in Ethical Studies we may perhaps think Bradley's ethical theory as ultimately individualistic, concerned with developing the individual's best qualities. Bradley does temper this by suggesting that the sphere in which this self-realisation occurs is "My Station and Its Duties", an "objective world" in which we must seek "...social...and non-social perfection" (Bradley 1927:226), but it is a setting only, and there appears to be little concept in Bradley of the *whole* of society as a single unit, as in Herder and Hegel and - we might suggest - Eliot. This may, however, be simply a question of emphasis within the text. This question may be important but it is not a question that can be answered, in Bradley's view. Despite arguing that morality is the ideal self's realisation, Bradley concludes that the concept of morality is a mere chimaera. His "Concluding Remarks" deflate all that goes before. "The position we are now in", he comments,

> can be put shortly. Morality is an endless process, and therefore a self-contradiction...it does not remain standing...but feels the impulse to transcend its existing reality. (Bradley 1927:313)

This conclusion is typically Bradleyan; an ultimate position is outlined, and then found to be limited. Bradley's mind is constantly searching for a transcendent conclusion, which is beyond human reason. The same conclusion is reached in Appearance and Reality, where in the concluding chapter he suggests that "...in the end Reality is inscrutable." (Bradley 1946:488). Morality is the same.

Bradley's next work, the 1883 Principles of Logic, has no political or social content and we may safely pass it by except in its conclusion that ultimately every judgement has Reality as the subject, in one form or other. Reality is that greater whole which to our perception is presented only as a range of fragments. This found

its greatest expression in Bradley's 1893 Appearance and Reality.

This comprises two Books. In the first, "Appearance", Bradley suggests that phenomena we encounter are merely appearances, and are contradictory. Concepts such as space and thing are appearance. All these attributes are related, and cannot be seen independently. This, he argues "...conducts us to no end" (Bradley 1946:211) and is an inescapable quagmire of infinite relation. In Book Two, "Reality", Bradley argues that these infinitely related appearances are misrepresentations of the one underlying reality, the Absolute. This Absolute, similar to Hegel's, was the cosmic harmony of which all sentient beings were part. No individual member of this reality was independent; there was mutual dependence of things in their relationships, and as apparently separate items they "...are but features and aspects of a unity" (Bradley 1946:356). This Absolute was however difficult to comprehend by thought's processes. As with Hegel, Bradley did not consider the Absolute to be only a mental concept. The Absolute always tends to incarnate itself in existence. By existence Bradley meant an event in time that could be perceived. Ultimately, however, Bradley is virtually forced to admit defeat, and concludes that at the end of philosophical endeavours, we "...find in the end Reality is inscrutable" (Bradley 1946:488). He finishes his essay in agreeing with "...the essential message of Hegel..." (Bradley 1946:489) that the Absolute resides beyond our apprehension of the world, and inhabits the spiritual dimension:

> Outside of the spirit there is not...any reality, and, the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more it is real.
> (Bradley 1946:489)

There is little of political interest in Appearance and Reality, although

Bradley does comment on practical activity in general, and some of what he has to say on that issue might be applicable to politics. But there is no link between theory and practice, according to Bradley. Philosophy does not spill over into action, as Bosanquet et al held. In Appearance and Reality, "activity" is dealt with by Bradley in the first Part, making it mere appearance. It is not real, and in examining activity "...we begin to involve ourselves in further obscurity"; Bradley also refers to activity as "...this ambiguity" (Bradley 1946:55-56). Ultimately, it is

> ...a mass of inconsistency…[it] must be condemned as appearance...activity has no meaning...
> (Bradley 1946:59-60)

Bradley's other comments on the organisation of society come in the two above mentioned essays. The first, “Some Remarks on Punishment”, was first published in the International Journal of Ethics. It examines whether Darwinism in ethics might be as "revolutionary" as in biology. Bradley’s remarks about society in this essay confirm him as Hegelian in politics. "We...need not distinguish", he suggests,

> the community from the state. The welfare of the whole exists nowhere outside the individual, and the individuals have rights and duties only as members of the whole. This is the revised Hellenism - or…the organic view of things - urged by German Idealism early in the present century. (Bradley 1935a:1/150)

In the other political essay, the 1894 “The Limits of Individual and National Self-Sacrifice”, Bradley again supports an Hegelian thesis. Bradley claims that

> The life of the individuals in…the development of humanity in the organism of the state, is the end [of society]. (Bradley 1935c:166)

Although Eliot studied Bradley’s work probably closer than that of any writer,

and, we might assume, knew Ethical Studies, Appearance and Reality and Collected Essays well, we might be bold enough to suggest that Eliot's political philosophy is not influenced by it to a noticeable extent. One reason for this, especially relevant for the author of The Idea of a Christian Society, is Bradley's secularism. He is dismissive of religion, which was at the heart of Eliot's later vision. In Ethical Studies there is little mention of the divine will for humanity until the last pages; Bradley's "dictate of morality", quoted above, is centred on the worldly man. There is no divine will, or any end for man except for in the world, a different view from Eliot. The world of theology, according to Bradley, and the world of morality, are completely discreet; in Essay VI, "Ideal Morality", Bradley suggests that the "ideal" self is for this world, but

> ...of course if religion, and more particularly if Christianity be brought in, the answer must be different. (Bradley 1927:231)

Bradley seems here to think that the religious dimension is a distraction; moreover, the realm of faith

> ...lies beyond morality: my moral conscience knows nothing about it. (Bradley 1927:231)

For Eliot, this was impossible. Bradley terms religion "...essentially a doing", which, given his stance on activity, suggests that it is merely appearance (Bradley 1946:15). For Eliot, religion was essentially a *believing*; action stemmed from doctrine. Bradley's remarks on religion are at their most mordant when he suggests

> Well, culture has told us what God *was* for the Jews; and we learn that "I am what I am" means the same as "I blow and grow, that I do". [sic] (Bradley 1914a:317)

Ultimately, it cannot be said that Bradley was doctrinally a Christian. Bradley

denied the key Christian belief in the Incarnation. "Religion, we have seen," wrote Bradley,

> must have an object; and that object is neither an abstract idea in the head, nor one particular thing or quality...It can not be a person or thing in the world. (Bradley 1914a:319)

This position led Bradley into developing a secular vision of society. There is no provision in Bradley for Divine Providence, nor of any idea of human society based upon a divine model. His essay "Some Remarks on Punishment" contains his most secular vision of society. "We have all agreed"

> that the community...should more or less consciously regulate itself, and deliberately play its own Providence. (Bradley 1935b:150)

There is no room in Bradley for God. For him, suggests Wollheim, "...both God and religion fall short of consistency" (Wollheim 1959:271), and "...for Bradley, God is not ultimately real" (Wollheim 1959:273). For Eliot this was impossible. Bradley's system was at odds with what would become Eliot's to such a degree that it is difficult to suggest that Bradley influenced Eliot's social criticism. We are bound to hold that, if Eliot was influenced by Idealist thought in his politics, then it was probably the Hegelian strain. And so this begs another question: what exactly did Eliot know of Absolute Idealist philosophy? Moreover, can we ascertain this, nearly a century after Eliot's philosophical studies concluded?

Chapter 3. T S Eliot's encounter with Idealist Philosophy

Eliot's encounter with Idealism at Harvard and Oxford was extensive. He was studying philosophy at the time of Absolute Idealism's twentieth-century heyday, between 1907 and 1916. At Harvard 1907-1908, he took several courses in philosophy. Under Palmer he studied Philosophy A1, the history of ancient philosophy. With Santayana he took Philosophy B2, the history of modern philosophy. A year later, with Santayana, he took Philosophy 10, the philosophy of history, which pertained to "...the ideals of society, religion, art and science, in their historical development" (Jain 1992:252). Eliot's own philosophical reading was wide. His personal library contained many philosophical works, which he read with great attention. In 1911, as mentioned above, he read Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, the annotations of which will be used later.

As a graduate student in the year 1911-1912 he took four courses. Philosophy 4 was a course in ethics - "...the theory of morals, considered constructively" (Jain 1992:254) - with Palmer. With Woods he studied Greek philosophy, in Philosophy 12. Adams guided Eliot through Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz, in Philosophy 14a, while in an "...elementary laboratory course" (Jain 1992:54) he studied experimental psychology. The following year saw Eliot undergo advanced study. With Schmidt he took Philosophy 8, advanced logic. With Bakewell he took two courses, Philosophy 15, "...the Kantian philosophy", and course 20c, a seminar course in metaphysics, "...the nature of reality". Another seminar course, 20b, was taken in psychology. In

1913-1914 he continued the study of reality with Hoernle, a seminar course, Philosophy 20a. Another course was taken in ethics, 20d, with Perry, while he finished his taught studies at Harvard with Josiah Royce's 20c, "...a comparative study of various types of scientific method" (Jain 1992:256).

Unfortunately, there is little to aid us in seeing in depth exactly what Eliot studied. The material in the public domain in Harvard Archives relating to the above courses "...is not comprehensive"[10]. It comprises three documents. The first is the reading and course instruction list from History 1a. The second is the class notes of Straussberger for Philosophy B, and the third is Morrison's class notes from Philosophy 10.

The History 1a course covered, in thirty-one sessions, European history from the decline of Rome to "...the end of the Middle Ages", circa 1500AD (Harvard 1906:67). Its scope was primarily political, and not the history of ideas.

The class notes from Philosophy B2 are different. Its range was wide, being an introductory course to Western Philosophy from the Socratics to Kant. Although it covered an enormous amount of material, the lectures appear to go into detail. Philosophy B2 ran three times a week, and made its way biographically rather than thematically, each lecture focusing upon one philosopher. There were three lectures on Berkeley, May 2nd, 7th and 9th 1908. Students had to read "...the first fifty sections of 'Principles of Human knowledge'" (Straussberger HUC 89:80). His system of thought is described as "...coherent, the simplest road to idealism"

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[10] Letter to the author, 31/3/99. There are more texts in the archive, but these may not be consulted without the permission of Mrs Valerie Eliot and I failed to be granted this.

(Straussberger HUC 89:84), and "...a profound piece of work..." which was "...all inclusive [and] touches every problem" (Straussberger HUC 89:86). In these lectures, Eliot was presented with a positive view of Idealism, to such an extent that Hume's work is said to merely "supplement" that of Berkeley (Straussberger HUC 89:86).

Kant's philosophy likewise occupied three lectures, May 21st, 23rd (missed by Straussberger) and 28th 1908. He was described as "...the greatest intellect in Europe" (Straussberger HUC 89:95), although his style is lamented - "...he writes without any thought for the reader...A very poor writer" (Straussberger HUC 89:96). The lectures deal mostly with the Critique of Pure Reason, of which it gives a comprehensive survey; Kant's other works may have been dealt with in the session missed.

Morrison's notes from Philosophy 10 are not of the same quality, Morrison apparently being more interested in doodling than in listening to his professor. The course begins with Greek art and continues in what might be thought an eccentric fashion, at least for a philosophy course. There are few mentions of any texts. Its approach is thematic. As well as Greek art, science is studied, and politics, and the nature of religious sensibility. Some history creeps in also, with a lecture on the spread of Christianity and the reasons for its successes. Protestantism receives some notice, with the observation that "...the northern nations are apt to take Christianity - and give it up ([e.g.] Darwin)" (Morrison HUC:32) - Eliot, notably, was to later echo this theme in The Idea of a Christian Society (see below). The course concludes with a study of the Renaissance, and a session on "...Literature and Life" (Morrison

HUC:36). Eventually, Morrison disengages with the course and his notes are filled with pictures of Santayana, "...our gentle-eyed professor" (Morrison HUC:28). Although Philosophy 10's subjects in many ways precurse Eliot's own preoccupations, overall it does not contain much of interest to us.

However, from the evidence given in Straussberger's notes of Philosophy B2, and the extant documents from the other lecture courses he took, it would seem reasonable to assume that Eliot had an excellent working knowledge of Idealist philosophy up to and including Kant; and that he knew Kant's philosophy in some depth from Philosophy 15 of 1912-1913, and that his mind was exercised in the understanding of the nature of reality, having taken Philosophy 20c in 1912-1913, and Philosophy 20a, 1913-1914. It was in 1913 that Eliot acquired his copy of Bradley's Appearance and Reality. From the extant Harvard sources, it is not possible to say that Eliot was acquainted formally with Hegel, but Eliot did his own detailed reading of Hegel.

Eliot's knowledge of Bradley is easier to ascertain. In Oxford he became acquainted as few others have done with Bradley, the fruit of which work was published as Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F H Bradley in 1964. This was no ordinary doctoral dissertation, and showed Eliot to be an accomplished philosopher. It is one of the relatively small number of secondary works on the British Idealist, was said by Eliot's supervisor to be of "...exceptional value" (Eliot 1988:139) and by Royce as "...the work of an expert" (Eliot 1988:142) and forms part of the bibliography on Bradley in Edwards' Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Edwards 1968:1/363). It showed Eliot having a command of contemporary Idealist

philosophy which was beyond that of an ordinary student and its notes show that he was acquainted with the contemporary work of Russell and Frege also. Moreover, Eliot's PhD course was not solely on Bradley, and this is sometimes overlooked, as in Mallinson's 2003 T S Eliot's Interpretation of F H Bradley. The Harvard programme demanded examinations also. There were three to be taken. First, a paper in ancient philosophy. Second, modern philosophy to Kant, and third, either metaphysics or modern philosophy from Kant, or ancient philosophy from Aristotle (Eliot 1988:124). From this, it is reasonable to assume that Eliot had excellent working knowledge of the ideas of all the great Idealist and Absolute Idealists whose work has been outlined above (except Herder, who does not figure in his taught courses). Now it is time to examine more closely elements of the philosophy of Hegel, and to examine possible correlations with it in Eliot's work, with special reference to The Idea of a Christian Society.

Part Two:
The Hegelian T S Eliot

...it is just when we think that we may be moving away from him
that Hegel is most likely to be sneaking up behind us.
(Jacques Lacan, quoted in McCarney 2000:5)

The greatest debts are not always the most evident.
(Eliot 1965e:126)

And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
(Eliot 1969:197)

I acknowledge that there are other readings of Hegel
on these views.
(Brod 1992:7)

Hegel is the least familiar of all the major philosophers,
or rather, the most misunderstood.
(Weil 1998:1)

Chapter 4. Some Introductory Remarks on Methodology and Hegel's Writings

Having outlined the thesis, and briefly introduced Absolute Idealism, we proceed to a more detailed examination of Hegel's ideas in order to ascertain whether Eliot adopted any recognisable Hegelian strands of thought. Students of Hegel's philosophical system traditionally have found him a difficult writer, and some preliminary remarks will be helpful before we proceed.

The examination of some key concepts in Hegel's political writings and

comparing Eliot's to them, will naturally lead to a sense of distortion; Hegel's system aimed at unity and coherence (although scholars differ as to the degree of this unity), and such qualities are difficult to achieve in what must for us be an inspection of key words and phrases. We dissect what Hegel united. Moreover, by examining concepts in turn one of Hegel's characteristics may tend to be denied: his work is extremely fluid, and in each work - and indeed within each individual work - concepts tend not to be exactly stable in meaning. As McCarney notes of the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History,

> The framework…is composed of a small group of elements. Those that must figure in the basic list are "reason", "the Idea", "God"...They have this status because each seems at different times to be cast in the role of the central category of the philosophy of history. (McCarney 2000:23)

As what we aim at is essentially a comparative study, and not an examination of Hegel's concepts *per se*, errors produced by this potential problem might perhaps be forgiven.

There are other methodological problems facing our undertaking. First, what is the significance of Eliot's annotations in his copy of Hegel's Lectures? It will be worth while briefly to examine this artefact, as it has not been used before in academic study. With what are we dealing? It is part of the Eliot Bequest in the Houghton Library of Harvard University. It has a book plate inscribed "The Gift of the Children of Charlotte Eliot". This suggests that it may have stayed in America whilst Eliot travelled on his abortive grand-tour before Oxford. Whether Eliot was ever re-united with his book, cannot be discovered. It is catalogue number *AC9.El464.Zz905H. Eliot inscribed the book with his name and lodging-place of

1911, Apley Court.

There are questions we will need to address if these marginal notes are to reveal anything. Firstly, what does it mean to make a marginal note? We cannot know for certain what Eliot meant in his marks. There is no key provided. Presumably the passages he highlights were important in some way, either positively or negatively. If he then pondered them, perhaps they entered his memory and lodged there like so many other texts he drew upon later.

A second problem is the perennial bugbear of translation. Lowe-Porter, in the translation of Mann's Doktor Faustus, quotes the following (mysoginist) epigram which sums up our problem with Hegel:

> Les traductions sont comme les femmes: lorsqu'elles sont belles, elles ne sont pas fidèles, et lorsqu'elles sont fidèles, elles ne sont pas belles. (Mann 1968:7)

If this is true of a novel, then it is doubly true of Hegel's texts which are renowned for their idiosyncrasies. This can produce some surprising translations, and we should bear this in mind as we come to seek the meaning of Hegel's concepts and whether Eliot used them. There are some wonderful examples of how Hegelian terms can be (mis)translated. Pulkinnen writes:

> ...when Philosophy of Right was first translated into Finnish...the term used for "*Sittlichkeit*" was "siveellisyys", which means something like "prudishness" and has caused some unfortunate confusions. (Pulkinnen 1997:40)

Such (mis)translations are not confined to older texts, however. Even Taylor gives

the simple translation of "ethics" to Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* (Taylor 1975:xi)[11]. Such translations can misrepresent Hegel's often very complex thought. However, another old text - Ernest Barker's 1915 Political Thought in England from Herbert Spencer to the Present Day, which may be of importance to our study because it was published when Eliot was at Oxford - translates *Sittlichkeit* more sympathetically, in describing

> That system of institutions and influences Hegel embraces in the term Social Ethics (*Sittlichkeit*); and in Social Ethics he finds the reconciliation of the mere externality of law and the mere inwardness of morality. (Barker 1915:27)

This definition may have appealed to Eliot who would later write The Idea of the Christian Society, with its notion of Christian culture. There are other examples of this kind of problem in Hegel's work, and it is worth holding this potential difficulty in mind as we approach our task.

Linked with the problem of translation is the greater one of interpretation. In reading a small selection of the vast secondary literature on Hegel, and faced with the multiplicity of versions of the German philosopher's thought, one is tempted to think that there were several G W F Hegels. This is a problem for a comparative study like ours, where there is not scope to examine in detail each concept Hegel propounded. As Pulkinnen again comments - a propos of the term *Sittlichkeit* -

> This [term] always leaves room for interpretation...The history of Hegel reception with its radically different interpretations of what Hegel actually meant, provides ample evidence of this. (Pulkinnen 1997:31)

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[11] Perhaps Taylor's translation accords with his apparent dislike of what he terms Hegel's "bizarre doctrines", such as *Geist* (Taylor 1975:571).

This leaves us with a dilemma: which version of Hegel do we see as authentic? We might be forced to accept that there is no universal "authoritative" Hegel, but only a variety of valid opinions. But alas further discussion on this must be left aside. Added to these pitfalls are two considerations which we must also bear in mind: first, that Hegel's thought changed over the years and as Patten comments

> ...there are...significant differences between [Hegel's] early and mature texts that make it impossible to justify treating the entire Hegelian corpus as a unified body of thought... (Patten 1999:5)

Secondly, Hegel's writing can be ambiguous and even contradictory. As Patten comments,

> There is a genuine tension in his [i.e. Hegel's] conception of freedom between the emphasis on thought and philosophical reflection…on the one hand, and the desire to attribute freedom to ordinary agents living out the customary morality of their social institutions in an only partially reflective way, on the other. (Patten 1999:61)

It seems each interpreter has his or her own version of Hegel, and some of these appear contradictory. In relying upon them for guidance, we receive potential distortions, and also a snap-shot of current debate in Hegel studies, which may only by chance be helpful. We might spend a little time investigating this potential difficulty in our task in order, once again, to appreciate its difficulties. We might preface our discussion with Weil's remark in the 1998 English translation of his Hegel and the State:

> Despite the large number of excellent books on Hegel that have appeared in the course of the last thirty years…Hegel is the least familiar of all the major philosophers, or rather, the most misunderstood. (Weil 1998:1)

Since Hegel's demise in 1831, he has received radically different interpretations. As Avineri suggests,

> Since [Hegel's death], almost every shade of political philosophy had protagonists claiming to state its case in what they considered to be a legitimate interpretation of Hegelianism. Socialists like...Marx and Lascelle related their philosophies to Hegel...just as did liberals like Green, Bosanquet and Croce, and fascists like Gentile... (Avineri:1972:3)

In modern times, the debate about the status of Hegel's political thought - at least in the English-speaking world - has centred around the attempt by Pelczynski to rehabilitate Hegel as a liberal. As Dickey suggests, Pelczynski in the 1964 collection Hegel's Political Writings,

> ...wished...to introduce students to a more "liberal" Hegel, one whose ideas were more in line with the mainstream of western political thinking. (Hegel 1999:vii)

A debate has followed. For Westphal, Hegel is definitely a liberal thinker. He prefaces his "The Basic Context and Structure of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" with the following:

> I argue that Hegel is a reform-minded liberal who bases his political philosophy on the...fulfilment of individual human freedom. (Westphal 1993:234)

According to Westphal,

> ...Hegel's organicism is not inherently conservative because he stressed that a society's practices are subject to rational criticism. (Westphal 1993:237)

For other writers, Hegel *is* such a conservative writer. Patten, in Hegel's Idea of Freedom, suggests in complete contradiction that

> Hegel was essentially a conservative political thinker... (Patten 1999:136-7)

Brod would agree:

> The Hegelian political logic is decidedly anti-liberal... (Brod 1992:5)

Although many approach the classification of Hegel on the liberal/conservative dichotomy, coming to often completely opposite conclusions, there are others who attempt a different classification. Taylor, for example, suggests that it is impossible to classify Hegel at all:

> ...Hegel has been difficult to classify on liberal/conservative spectrums. [sic] For…he speaks of the state as divine. And this kind of thing we think of as…conservative, even reactionary thought. But this order is utterly unlike those of the tradition. There is nothing in it which is not transparently dictated by reason itself... (Taylor 1979:81)

Some authorities prefer to locate Hegel in a pre-modern political world, where differentiation into liberal and conservative is anachronistic. Wood, for example sees Hegel in the Classical mould:

> Hegel's philosophy is an attempt to renew classical philosophy, especially the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, within the modern philosophical tradition begun with Kant. (Wood 1993:211)

Some more recent Hegel scholars also see the debate in terms of classical - or, perhaps more correctly, Renaissance - references. Patten, for example, sees the "civic humanist" reading of Hegel as accurate. For Patten, this critique derives from Hegel's

> ...idea that the highest practical good for human beings involves participation in community…and, in particular, leading the life of the good citizen. (Patten 1999:38)

This side-steps the old left/right debate, but whether for our purposes it clarifies the

situation is yet to be seen. Another possible problem for us is that no author - at least those consulted for the present study - takes trouble to define what constitutes a conservative or liberal view of society. There is much assumption. This appears to centre around two nodes of thought, that: (a) that emphasis upon objective authority, private property, and the rule of law denotes conservatism; and (b) that emphasis upon freedom (for the individual and for groups), and democracy denotes a liberal view.[12] Hegel can be classified in parts of his work as either "conservative" or "liberal", and as we come to compare his work with Eliot's - who is nearly always seen to be conservative[13] - this is another possible difficulty.

Another pit-fall is Hegel's almost unique density of writing which sometimes seems to border on the inscrutable. The problem, in simple terms, is this: Hegel is a very difficult writer to understand.[14] Hegel himself did not find writing easy. McCarney notes the following from Hegel's letters:

> My Lectures on the philosophy of world history have taken up my time...day and night, so that in the end I found my stomach upset and my mind exhausted. (McCarney 2000:9)

Perhaps one reason why Hegel is seen as abstruse is his metaphysics. Politics is not simply politics for Hegel: it is also ethics, developing world history and also - and this is distinctively Hegelian - the development of *Geist*, which is also a theological

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[12] These descriptions are taken from Scruton's The Meaning of Conservatism (1984), which admits that "conservatism" might in the end "only be negatively described" (p.119).

[13] Scruton calls him an "articulate conservative" (Scruton 1984:20), and "social conservative" (Scruton 1984:41).

[14] I have found only one suggestion that Hegel is anything but hard reading, and this is from Ryan, who states "Hegel's Philosophy of Right is not in the least difficult" (Ryan 1992:8).

study. For some modern scholars this metaphysical leaning can be alien. As even the sympathetic Pelczynski suggests,

> Hegel could have kept his political theory quite distinct from his general philosophy…Hegel thought that only by transporting politics to the metaphysical plain and giving his concepts a speculative underpinning could he establish their validity. It is this quest for absolute proof...which constitutes one of the distinctive characteristics of Hegel's political thought. (Pelczynski 1964:136)

- and, we might add, also one of its characteristic difficulties for modern readers. But to strip Hegel of metaphysics is to make a naked Hegel. Even Taylor is guilty of this. In an effort to make Hegel approachable, he attempts to rid him of what he seems to imply are embarrassing metaphysics. He writes in the 1979 Hegel and Modern Society:

> To understand why Hegel's philosophy remains…relevant for today even though his ontology of *Geist* is close to incredible, we have to [examine his concept of freedom]. (Taylor 1979:69)

Taylor, it seems, is at once embarrassed and impressed by Hegel. Such palpable mis-representations of Hegel are a potential source of problems for our study, for they will tend to distort our view of the "real" Hegel, especially when we compare Hegel with Eliot, for whom such "incredible" concepts such as *Geist* were perhaps not so alien. Unless, perhaps, we approach Hegel on his own terms - and this means learning a new vocabulary and system of reference - he is likely to always elude us. As Avineri suggests,

> ...[Hegel's] thought is subtle and complex; his writings are difficult, even infuriating - laden with impenetrable and pretentious jargon from which his meaning can be separated only with skilled and careful surgery, even then usually not without risk of mortal injury. (Avineri 1972:xxvi)

There is another problem for us - that of the texts themselves. Many of Hegel's works are versions of lectures and often bear the hand of Hegel's editors. As Patten suggests, of Philosophy of Right, "The text is difficult in places", with alternative readings and perhaps even lacunae. Such problems are even more evident in Hegel's Phenomenology, part of the middle section of which overcomes most scholars, it seems. One could list many examples of scholar's problems with interpreting Hegel. We shall content ourselves with but two of these. Beiser calls Hegel's explanation of his historical method "...very brief, dense and obscure" (Beiser 1993:282), while Maki describes

> The section on the system of needs in Philosophy of Right...[as] both extensive and dense. (Maki 1997:93)

Chapter 5. Some Possible Hegel Allusions

...mature poets steal... (Eliot 1928a:105)[15]

Conscious of these problems, we now proceed in examining the possible Hegelian strand in Eliot's thought. If we come to recognise this in Eliot's mind, it will simply be one strand amongst many. Studying Eliot's mind is like attempting to assimilate the history of Western Civilisation, with much Eastern Civilisation as well. In Eliot's texts, there are countless allusions to other works of art, from literature to sculpture. Hegel would have to take his place amongst others. Eliot's juvenile poems Inventions of the March Hare, edited by Ricks and already referred to, show how many allusions can be found in the early poetry alone. Rick's textual notes are full of references (from The Acts of the Apostles to Yeats). Given the array of material Eliot drew upon for his poetry, it is tempting to suggest that Eliot never forgot anything he read.[16] Every word, it seems, lodged in his mind, later to emerge in his creativity.

The works of philosophers are also cited in Eliot's early verses, according to

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[15] The complete quotation is "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better." From "Philip Massinger", in The Sacred Wood, p. 105.

[16] In the essay "What Dante Means to Me", Eliot wrote of The Divine Comedy "...when I thought I had grasped the meaning of a passage...I committed it to memory; so that *for some years*, I was able to recite a large part of one canto or another to myself" (Eliot 1965:125) [my Italics]. Eliot suggests that this process was begun "forty years ago", which, as Eliot was writing in 1950, would put this memorisation circa 1910, around the same period as Eliot was reading Hegel's Philosophy of World History.

Ricks. Aristotle, Bergson, and Kant are listed, and so is Hegel. Ricks provides two examples of an Hegelian turn of phrase in Eliot, in the poems "Suite Clownesque"[17], and "The Triumph of Bullshit"[18]. Both these poems make allusion to Hegel's Lectures, which Eliot had annotated.

There are many other definite and some possible allusions to Hegel in Eliot's work, which I have discovered in the course of research, and which do not appear to have been recognised before. This may open a rich new seam in the mine of Eliot studies. These allusions, I believe, provide further evidence that Eliot was influenced by Hegelian philosophy in his social criticism. The allusions are in the following words or phrases used by Eliot, first of all in his poetry.

In "Difficulties of a Statesman" (Eliot 1969:129):

1. *A commission is appointed*
   to confer with a Volscian commission
   About ***perpetual peace****...*

In "Burnt Norton" (Eliot 1969:171-173):

2. *If all time is* ***eternally present***
   All time is unredeemable.

and

3. *Caught in the form of limitation*
   Between ***being and unbeing***

and

4. *Here is a place of disaffection*
   Time before and time after

---

[17] Eliot, T S, Inventions of the March Hare (Eliot 1996). The poem is on p. 35, and the notes on p. 173.

[18] The poem is on p. 307, the notes on p. 308.

and

5. ***Erhebung*** *without motion*

In "East Coker" (Eliot 1969:177-178):
6. *...In a warm haze the sultry light*
Is absorbed, not refracted, by ***grey*** *stone...*
Wait for the early ***owl****.*

and

7. *The serenity only a deliberate* ***hebetude***

and

8. *In that open field...*
On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
Of the weak pipe and the little drum
And see them dancing round the bonfire
The association of man and woman
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie -
A dignified and commodious sacrament...
Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth
Mirth of those long since under earth
Nourishing the corn. Keeping time,
Keeping the rhythm in their dancing
As in their living in the living seasons
The time of the seasons and the constellations
The time of milking and the time of harvest
The time of coupling of man and woman
And that of beasts.

In "The Dry Salvages" (Eliot 1969:190):
9. *Driven by daemonic,* ***chthonic***
Powers.

In "Little Gidding" (Eliot 1969:192-197)
10. *Nor is it an incantation*
To summon the spectre of a ***rose.***

and

11. *The moment of the* ***rose*** *and the moment of the yew-tree*
Are of equal ***duration****.*

and

12. *Here, the intersection of the timeless moment*
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

and

13. *So, while the light fails*
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
For history is now and England

The works of Hegel which may have given rise to these allusions are as follows.

The first, ***perpetual peace***, can be found in Philosophy of Right, in discussion of Kant's idea of perpetual peace:

> Perpetual peace is often demanded as an ideal to which mankind should approximate. (Hegel 1991b:362)

A few pages later on, Hegel comments:

> Kant's idea of a *perpetual peace* guaranteed by a federation of states... (Hegel 1991b:362) [Hegel's Italics]

That Hegel's references to "perpetual peace" are about Kant's essay "Perpetual Peace", may raise the question of whether Eliot gained the phrase from Kant. This may be the case, but the probability - given both Eliot's other putative allusion to Philosophy of Right - remains that it is from Hegel.

The second, ***eternally present***, comes in Hegel's Lectures, in Sibree's translation:

> ...for philosophy, as occupying itself with the True, has to do with the ***eternally present***. Nothing in the past is lost for it...Spirit is immortal; with it there is no past, no future, but an essential *now*. (Hegel 1905:82) [Hegel's Italics]

Eliot made a marginal note on the above (see Appendix 1). The phrase obviously had resonance with him in 1911, more than twenty years before "Burnt Norton".

The third phrase - or, rather, one similar - ***being and unbeing***, occurs in Hegel's

1803 work On the Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law:

> The critical philosophy has had the important negative effect on the theoretical sciences [firstly] of demonstrating that the scientific element within them is not something objective, but belongs to the intermediate realm between nothingness and reality, to a mixture of ***being and not-being***... (Hegel 1999e:104) [my Italics]

The slight dissonance between phrases should not dissuade us from suggesting that one led from the other. Eliot had the need for euphony, and, as a perusal of Eliot's The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry will show, Eliot when quoting from memory often made slips.

Phrase number four, ***time before and time after***, like phrase three is slightly changed. In Hegel, the wording is *before or after time*, which is part of his definition of eternity contained in Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. The eternal world, he asserted, is not "before or after time", but rather "the absolute present, the now" (Hegel in McCarney 2000:50). Eliot's context would appear to have a certain parallel with Hegel's: Eliot describes "this place of disaffection", which is characterised by "time before and time after" (Eliot 1969:173).

The fifth word, ***Erhebung***, Eliot may have picked up in reading a German version of Hegel's writings, as the term revolution is a consistent one in his work. "Erhebung", however, is a more problematic allusion, as in its context in Burnt Norton it refers to a prayerful attitude rather than political upsurge. Milward, for example, suggests that

> ...the term "Erhebung", which is the German word for elevation or "levitation", [is] a phenomenon which appears in some mystics… (Milward 1968:38-3)

Given that this better fits the context, and also the paucity of Eliot's German, we lay

this aside.

The sixth of our collections of words is tenuous, although enticing. Any mention of owls with Hegel summons up the (in)famous Owl of Minerva, which only flew at dusk:

> When philosophy paints its grey in grey, a shape of life has grown old, and it cannot be rejuvenated, but only recognised, by the grey in grey of philosophy; the owl of Minerva begins its flight only at the onset of dusk.
> (Hegel 1991b:23)

Eliot's East Coker, in which he sets his own "early owl", is, like Hegel's Minerva, approaching the end of day - the owl is expected. The village stones are grey, just as Hegel's philosophy. And, perhaps, there is a correlation between the setting of Hegel's owl and Eliot's. For Hegel, the owl flies only in the approaching darkness, which is usually interpreted as a comment on philosophy that it only comprehends and speaks when this is no longer needed. Eliot's "early owl" is set to fly over the village in which ghostly dancers are appearing, which one will see only if "one does not come too close". Perhaps Eliot is hinting that to approach the real meaning of the ancestors' significant soil is an approach made when that world has all but disappeared, in Hegel's phrases "grown old" and beyond "rejuvenation". Both Hegel's philosophy of philosophy and Eliot's rural idyll are given in decaying visions.

The seventh word, ***hebetude***, again occurs in Sibree's translation of Hegel's Lectures:

> In contrast with the wretched ***hebetude*** of Spirit which we find among the Hindoos, a pure ether...meets us in the Persian conception [of Spirit].
> (Hegel 1991a:177) [Italics mine]

There is no other occurrence of the word "hebetude" in Eliot, and it is such a rare

word that it is possible that Eliot first read it in 1911.

The eighth allusion - given in the quotation from East Coker - follows from the fifth. In Hegel's vision of society, he seems to share with Eliot a sense of its fundamentally rural origins:

> The proper beginning...of states has been equated with the introduction of *agriculture* and of *marriage.* For the former principle brings with it the cultivation of the soil...and it reduces the nomadic life of savages...to the tranquillity of civil law...This is accompanied by the restriction of sexual love to marriage, and the marriage bond is in turn extended to become a *lasting* and inherently universal union...
> (Hegel 1991b:235) [Hegel's Italics]

Moreover,

> The *substantial* estate has its resources in the natural products of the *soil* which it cultivates...Given the association of work and acquisition with the fixed *individual* seasons, and the dependence of the yield on the varying character of the natural processes, the end to which need is directed in this case becomes that of *provision* for the future. But because of the conditions to which it is subject, this provision retains the character of subsistence in which reflection and the will of the individual play a lesser role, and thus its substantial disposition in general is that of an immediate ethical life based on the family relationship...
> (Hegel 1991b:235) [Hegel's Italics]

Although the lines of "East Coker" also correspond with Sir Thomas Elyot's The Booke of the Governour, we should not discount the possibility that Eliot chose them because of their close resonance with Hegel. Their provenance, it might be argued, is neither here nor there. We might suggest that Eliot's "East Coker" is the poetical expression of Hegel's vision of agrarian society. The life of Eliot's loam-feeted "dauncers" around the bonfire is centred around agriculture and "The association of man and woman" which is matrimony, called "a dignified and

commodious sacrament". They keep "the rhythm of the seasons" in their living, just as Hegel's pre-industrialists rely upon the "natural processes" and have their ethical life based on them. Moreover, in Eliot's vision there are no individuals as such; the dancers are considered as a group and they share a common fate of "nourishing the corn". The individual wills of Hegel's agrarians "play a lesser role". Eliot appears remarkably close to Hegel in East Coker's expression of agricultural society.

The ninth phrase, ***chthonic powers***, appears in Hegel's On the Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law:

> This reconciliation [i.e. between the needs of the individual and the group] consists precisely in the recognition of necessity…- and to the ***chthonic powers*** - by giving up and sacrificing part of itself to them.
> (Hegel 1999e:151) [Italics mine]

Allusion number ten, admittedly tenuous, has a possible link with Hegel's comment - which Eliot underlined - in the Lectures:

> …we must banish from our minds the prejudice in favour of duration, as if it had any advantage as compared to transience: the imperishable mountains are not superior to the quickly dismantled rose exhaling its life in fragrance.
> (Hegel 1991a:231)

Hegel's thoughts on time interested Eliot, and in this context more telling is allusion number eleven. Here, a yew tree and a rose are compared - representing longevity and transience, respectively. The yew tree might be seen to be like the mountains in Hegel's comment, while the rose - partly, at least - plays the object of fleeting beauty.[19] These objects are seen to be of equal worth, and both, we must note, use

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[19] Eliot's use of the symbol of the rose in poetry is complex. In "Ash Wednesday" it appears to

the key word *duration*, which we can be certain that Eliot read in Sibree's translation of Hegel's Lectures.

We end Eliot's poetical allusions to Hegel with a meditation on history. Numbers eleven and twelve above have a possible echo in Hegel's reflection on time in Lectures:

> ...for philosophy, as occupying itself with the True, has to do with the *eternally present*. Nothing in the past is lost for it, for the Idea is ever present...with it there is no past, no future, but an essential now.
> (Hegel 1991a:82) [Hegel's Italics]

From the above, two points must be made immediately. Except for the word *erhebung*, all the words and phrases appear in translation, and that might pose a difficulty: except for the Lectures, we cannot be sure that Eliot read these texts, and if he did we do not know whether he read them in the original or translation. However, we do know that Eliot read Sibree's translation of Lectures, and so can be certain beyond reasonable doubt that the words "hebetude", "eternally present" and the others would have been read by Eliot. For the other three words and

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represent the Virgin Mary. In "The Dry Salvages" the figure of the rose is one of transience; it is likened to "a faded song". This carries forward initially into "Little Gidding", where at first it is only as a "spectre" that the rose appears. However, the rose becomes a symbol of permanence and salvation: it is of equal duration with the yew-tree, and appears in the vision of the united fire and rose.

phrases, it seems likely that, given the unusual terminology of "being and unbeing" and even more of "chthonic powers", that Eliot had read Hegel's On the Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, and perhaps - or even probably - in an English translation.

Given the above, we have supported the idea in the same manner as Ricks in Inventions of the March Hare that Eliot owed certain words and phrases in his poetry to Hegel. From this, we might posit that his thoughts towards the end of the 1930's had taken at least an Hegelian cast of phrase.

The above allusions bar one occur within Four Quartets, and show Eliot, much later than the poems contained in Inventions of the March Hare, thinking in Hegelian terminology. Notably, The Idea of a Christian Society, written in 1939, is encapsulated between the first and last three Four Quartets: could Eliot's Hegelian turn of phrase be extended to include Hegelian arguments, in his critical writing?

Eliot's critical works also contain Hegelian allusions, and sometimes more. One example may be seen in the authors' treatment of Judaism. Both Hegel and Eliot have a similar understanding of this people, which will be examined in more depth later. Here, it suffices to suggest that both authors use similar arguments. For Eliot, in The Idea of a Christian Society, the Jews were an ambiguous group. Shying away from his 1934 suggestion in After Strange Gods that society would not prosper from too many "free thinking Jews", Eliot in his 1939 book is more conciliatory but still not *totally* accepting of Jewish citizens. As will be discussed below, this is fundamentally a philosophical standpoint and not racial: Eliot was too much an Absolute Idealist to accept a society which had *two* first religious principles - Christianity and Judaism.

Eliot's view is expressed in cautious language, for example:

> I am not suggesting that the latter alternative [i.e. a Christian Society] must lead to the forcible suppression...But a positive culture must have a positive set of values, and the dissentients must remain marginal... (Eliot 1939:70)

The members of these "sects" are not considered even as a viable *group* of people; they remain *individuals*, and as such they are fundamentally opposed to the rationally organised society Eliot desires:

> And perhaps there will always be individuals who...will yet remain blind, indifferent, or even hostile [to Christianity]. (Eliot 1939:68)

Jews, by very definition, had to be members of Eliot's "indifferent" "individuals". Individuals as such were outside society. This has some echo of Eliot's PhD thesis, wherein he makes the phrase "...the real is the organised" (Eliot 1964:82). Despite this rather limiting definition of social membership, Eliot is at pains to insist that non-Christian did have a voice in society. Although Eliot's "Community of Christians" would be made up of those who professed Christianity, there was room for other faiths. Of the people who made up this community, Eliot wrote:

> The mixture will include persons of exceptional ability who may be indifferent or disbelieving; there will be room for…other persons professing other faiths than Christianity. (Eliot 1939:63)

Eliot's language is grudgingly conciliatory. To this extent, it has certain similarities with Hegel. Whether Hegel was anti-Semitic or not is as moot a point in Hegel scholarship as it is in Eliot's, and it does seem that both have detractors and supporters. Pinkard suggests that accusations of anti-Semitism are justifiable in Hegel's early writings, where he saw Judaism as a religion "…merely of legalistic

servility" (Pinkard 2000:584). However, the later Hegel had "mulled over" and "rethought" this stance (Pinkard 2000:584). However, for Hegel the Jews "presented a distinct problem for Hegel's views" (Pinkard 2000:586). Firstly, Judaism had survived as a distinct culture well after *Geist* had passed it over in its development - Pinkard suggests Judaism should have "…vanished along with Egyptian, Greek and Roman religions…" (Pinkard 2000:586). Secondly, Hegel's vision of the state, which is based like Eliot's on a shared set of ideas bringing uniting culture, has a problem when it comes to dealing with members of groups who hold different ideologies. Judaism presented a differing *Sittlichkeit* to that of Christian-based society. Hegel is more positive than Eliot in granting Jews formal status in the State, it must be said. Seeing that membership of a religious community is beneficial for society, Hegel suggests that

> The state ought even to require all its citizens to belong to such a community - but to any community they please, for the state can have no say in the content of [religious belief]. (Hegel 1991b:295)

Hegel, however, qualifies this by adding the rider:

> ...it may well have been contrary to formal right to grant even civil rights to the *Jews*, on the grounds that the latter should be regarded not just as a particular religious group but also as members of a foreign nation...
> (Hegel 1991b:295) [Hegel's Italics]

The problem with Jewish members of society, according to Hegel, was that they had their own *Sittlichkeit*, a peculiar social system (and see below), and this led them to draw apart. Despite this, they also desired membership of the State. They were unassimilated. However, it seems as if Hegel were making an exception to his rule for the Jews, much in the same way as Eliot. As a religious group, they could not be

full members of the pervading Christian faith; and as such their status as true citizens was - logically at least - open to question. For Hegel, the Jews *might* be considered "foreigners"; for Eliot, the Jews *might* be seen in a similar way, for as non-Christians they could not really be full members of English (and in Eliot's mind, this meant Christian) society.

A second example of Eliot and Hegel coinciding in argument is that of a symbolic monarch. In For Lancelot Andrewes's "John Bramhall", Eliot made his debut as a Royalist, stating that the divine right of Kings was "...a noble faith" (Eliot 1970g:35). For Bramhall, Eliot believed, "...the king himself was a kind of symbol" (Eliot 1970g:35). Given the shortness of the essay, Eliot cannot elaborate on what he meant by this, but we might surmise that it involved the King being a representative figure to his people, who had, in Eliot's words, "...not merely a civil but a religious obligation toward his people" (Eliot 1936a:40). Perhaps Eliot had in mind the King being an exemplar of Christian living, the rest of society taking lead from its head. However, we must not pretend that the Bramhallian King was anything but absolute - Eliot states that Bramhall held that the "...monarch should have absolute power" (Eliot 1936:40).

Hegel's monarch was nothing like Bramhall's in executive power. He was much more akin to a constitutional monarch. Despite this, there is an interesting correlation between Eliot and Hegel in the king being a symbol. In The Philosophy of Right, Hegel suggests that the monarch holds a representational role as well as that of the governing of the state. "If a people", Hegel wrote,

> ...is envisaged as an internally developed and truly organic totality, its sovereignty will consist in the personality of the

> whole, which will in turn consist in the reality appropriate to its concept, i.e. the *person of the monarch.*
> (Hegel 1991b:319) [Hegel's Italics]

Although Eliot's interest in "John Bramhall" and Hegel's in Philosophy of Right are different, they both seem to view the monarch as a representational figure. Eliot may have picked up this idea from Hegel, although other potential sources cannot be excluded.

To the Jews and the monarch can be added Thomas Hobbes in the list of parallels. To Eliot, again in For Lancelot Andrewes, Hobbes is a figure of derision. Eliot's statement that Hobbes was an "upstart" whom the Renaissance had thrust upon the world is - we might consider - eccentric, except in a provocative essay like "John Bramhall". However, Eliot's concern to put Hobbes' mechanistic philosophy in its place has an echo in Hegel. For Eliot, viewing the development of seventeenth century philosophy,

> ...a philosopher like Hobbes has already a mixed attitude, partly philosophic and partly scientific...His theory of government has no philosophic basis: it is merely a collection of discrete opinions, prejudices, and genuine reflections upon experience which are given a spurious unity by a shadowy metaphysic. (Eliot 1970g:37)

Hegel, writing in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, has the same message.

"Society, the state, is to Hobbes," he wrote,

> absolutely pre-eminent...and because he places these in subjection to the state, his doctrines were of course regarded with the utmost horror. *But there is nothing speculative or really philosophic in them...* (Hegel 1896:316) [My Italics]

The above is taken from the 1896 translation of Hegel's work; Eliot conceivably may have consulted this in his studies. It is noteworthy that both authors use the

word *philosophic*: for Eliot, Hobbes's theory of government *has no philosophic basis*; Hegel suggests that there is *nothing speculative or really philosophic in [it]*. Hegel also notes that Hobbes's theories are derived not from first principles of logic, but

> ...from principles that lie within us, which we recognise as our own. (Hegel 1896:316)

In other words, they were *subjective* principles. Hegel also suggests that

> The views that he [i.e. Hobbes] adopts are shallow and empirical, but the reasons he gives for them…are original in character, inasmuch as they are derived from natural necessities and wants. (Hegel 1896:316-317)

This is not an entirely different opinion from that expressed by Eliot, who called Hobbes's theories "...merely a collection of discrete opinions, prejudices and genuine reflections upon experience."

There are, possibly, more ideas in Eliot's criticism which he gleaned from Hegel. Earlier than For Lancelot Andrewes, and interestingly in the middle of Eliot's seemingly "scientific" phase as a critic (see Part Three), he might be seen to adopt an Hegelian position on tradition and the writers of the European past. In his copy of Hegel's Lectures, Eliot made a note by the side of this text, in which Hegel discusses the importance of the historians of the ancient world:

> ...these historians, whom we must make thoroughly our own, with whom we must linger long, if we would live with their respective nations, and enter deeply into their spirit: of these historians, to whose pages we turn not for the purposes of erudition merely, but with a deep and genuine enjoyment, there are fewer than might be imagined. (Hegel 1991a:3)

It was not the paucity of ancient historians that interested Eliot here, it was Hegel's insistence that we must have an intimate relationship with them. This position Eliot

himself was to adopt in his “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, in which he argues for an almost "scientific" approach to the study and manufacture of texts. Eliot suggests that a writer needs the "historical sense" in his attaining the tradition, and this

> ...involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe...has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. (Eliot 1975:38)

Moreover, this historical sense is what make a writer part of the tradition:

> The historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. (Eliot 1975:38)

Eliot seems to share with Hegel a concern for the importance of past writers. Eliot would have authors write with the historic writers in his bones in a "simultaneous existence", and have a vibrant sense of history; Hegel would have his do much the same, entering deeply into the spirit of the dead writers, "lingering" with them, and entering their world wholeheartedly and not for "mere erudition". Both Eliot and Hegel had a profound historical sensibility, and perhaps Eliot's was fostered by reading Hegel.

The phenomenon of personality appears to have exercised a similar interest in both authors. In his copy of Hegel's Lectures, Eliot underlined an observation of the role of the Lama in Indic religion:

> The Lama's personality as such - his particular individuality - is therefore subordinate to the substantial essence which it embodies. (Hegel 1991a:179)

In discussing Greek civilisation, Hegel also focuses upon the role of personality,

and Eliot underlined the following sentences:

> The exhilarating sense of personality, in contrast with sensuous objection to nature…constitutes…the chief characteristic…of the Greeks. (Hegel 1991a:251)

This *exhilaration*, however, was not altogether a positive attribute. It led to a cultural limitation:

> ...it must be observed, that the divinity of the Greeks is not yet the *absolute*…but Spirit in a particular mode…still dependent as a determinate individuality on external conditions. (Hegel 1991a:253) [Hegel's Italics]

Moreover,

> That higher thought, the knowledge of Unity as God, - the one Spirit, - lay beyond that grade of thought which the Greeks had attained. (Hegel 1991a:256)

Brilliance marred by individuality might be seen as Hegel's judgement upon the Greeks. Eliot's critical writings would appear to put him in the same school. Perhaps reacting against his contemporaries' "cult" of the artist's personality, exemplified by the contemporary Bloomsbury Set, and previously by Romanticism, Eliot sought to sublimate the personality of the artist into his task. In the 1919 "Tradition and the Individual Talent", he suggested that the

> ...poet has not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium...in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. (Eliot 1975:42)

This might be seen to approach the description of Hegel's Lama. In this essay's (scientifically incorrect) analogy of platinum introduced into oxygen and sulphur di-oxide, this subsuming of personality in the artistic task is given its famous formula. This process allows the poet to escape from the shackle of personality:

> Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from

> emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. (Eliot 1975:43)

For Eliot's poet, emotion

> is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living. (Eliot 1975:44)

The artist had to eschew personality, and in so doing would find himself in communion with the living tradition (in Eliot's mind) of European civilisation. He would write with tradition "in his bones", as previously noted. Hegel's Lama had a similar vocation.

For Hegel, the highest development would come in the Reformed traditions of Germanic nations, and in this we have another remarkable correlation between his work and Eliot's. Lutheranism, for Hegel, was the arena for the true development of *Geist*. In the Lectures, he wrote:

> In the Lutheran Church the subjective feeling...of the individual is regarded as equally necessary with the objective side of Truth. Truth with Lutherans is not a finished thing; the subject himself must be imbued with substantial Truth, surrendering his particular being in exchange for the substantial Truth, and making that truth his own...Thus Christian freedom is actualised. If Subjectivity be placed in feeling only, without that objective side, we have the stand-point of the merely Natural Will. (Hegel 1991a:416)

This process is similar to Eliot's belief, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent", that in striving to "procure the consciousness of the past" the artist embarks upon

> ...a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. (Eliot 1975:40)

It might be considered notable that Eliot and Hegel use *surrender* to describe their own processes. Hegel also made reference to artistic impersonality in a comment on Schleiermacher in Lectures on the History of Philosophy which as we saw above Eliot may well have read. Hegel rejected Schleiermacher's emotionally-led philosophy. In criticising the view that "...subjectivity was everything...", Hegel suggests that "...the bad picture is that in which the artist shows himself..." (Hegel 1896:510): the artist should be invisible, his personality irrelevant.

Perhaps the best example of Eliot adopting wholesale Hegel's argument and language is seen through the lens provided by Machiavelli. For Hegel, Machiavelli is a seminal figure, for he prescribed for Italy what Hegel wished to see in Germany - unification and freedom. In The German Constitution, Hegel deals with Machiavelli at length and accords him a position which he has rarely achieved before or since. "In that unfortunate period", commented Hegel,

> Deeply conscious of this state of universal misery…an Italian statesman, with cool deliberation, grasped the necessary idea of saving Italy by uniting it into a single state. (Hegel 1964a:79)

For Hegel, Machiavelli appears as a saviour, anxious to rid his homeland of foreign occupation. His allotted task was simple: to devise a scheme of advice for his Prince in order to achieve this. Hegel, however, notes that Machiavelli has been largely misunderstood by subsequent generations. Although

> It is evident that a man who speaks with such true gravity was neither base-hearted nor frivolous-minded...the very name of Machiavelli carries with it the guarantee of disapproval… (Hegel 1964a:80)

People misconceive Machiavelli's principles, observed Hegel. Some were even

> ...short-sighted enough to regard his work as no more than a foundation for tyranny… (Hegel 1964a:80)

Machiavelli, according to Hegel, saw the problem in hand and simply suggested the best way to deal with it. To judge his stern methods of achieving Italian unity as despotic was simply, in Hegel's view, to misjudge context:

> ...even if his aim [of uniting Italy] is acknowledged, it is alleged that his means are abhorrent...But there can be no question here of any choice of means: gangrenous limbs cannot be cured by lavender-water, and a situation in which assassination has become common…permits no half-measures. (Hegel 1964a:80)

To achieve a true picture of Machiavelli, we have to judge him by the context of his times. Always with a mind for historical veracity, Hegel suggests that

> One must study the history of the centuries before Machiavelli…and then read *The Prince* in the light of [this]…and it will appear not only justified, but as a distinguished and truthful conception produced by a genuinely political mind of the highest and noblest sentiments. (Hegel 1964a:80-81)

Moreover, in studying the historical context, it is possible to see that Machiavelli intended his work to be applicable only to Italy, and not for general use:

> It is quite senseless to treat the exposition of an idea directly derived from observation of the Italian predicament as a compendium of…principles applicable indiscriminately to all situations… (Hegel 1964a:81)

Hegel is anxious to place Machiavelli in his context, and from that derive his true standing.

Machiavelli is also discussed by Eliot, in the essay "Niccolo Machiavelli", which was published in the 1928 For Lancelot Andrewes. Eliot's inclusion of the Machiavelli essay has always appeared odd (at least to me). It seems out of kilter

with the rest of the collection - so much so that Eliot expunged it when he re-published much of For Lancelot Andrewes' in the 1936 Essays Ancient and Modern; "Niccolo Machiavelli" was never to be published again. It also forms an opinion of Machiavelli which is distinctly eccentric - at least in the English tradition[20] - until one compares it with Hegel's observations.

There are notable similarities between the comments made by both men about Machiavelli. Hegel had placed him as a saviour of Italy, who was "deeply conscious" of its woes. Eliot too sees Machiavelli as a "Florentine patriot", who was

> ...wholly *devoted* - to his task of his own place and time; yet by surrendering himself to the cause of his particular State, and to the greater cause of the united Italy which he desired, he arrives at a far greater impersonality and detachment than Hobbes. (Eliot 1970b:51) [Eliot's Italics]

Not only should we note another "impersonality" theory, but we should also notice Eliot's concern, which is shared with Hegel, of placing Machiavelli "in his own place and time". To Eliot, he was *devoted*; to Hegel he was a man of *true gravity.* He is also a man who possessed a "political mind of the highest and noblest sentiments". Eliot's Machiavelli also had this quality. In discussing his view of religion within the state, Eliot suggests that

> His attitude is that of a statesman, and is as noble as that of any statesman. (Eliot 1970:b:55)

Eliot's sentence is so close to that of Hegel that it almost seems to be a paraphrase.

Eliot's Machiavelli is like Hegel's misunderstood:

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[20] This attitude can be seen in Sabine's A History of Political Theory which, although slightly later than Eliot's "Niccolo Machiavelli", contradicts Eliot's portrayal on virtually every point.

> No history could illustrate better than that of the reputation of Machiavelli the triviality and the irrelevance of influence…And yet no great man has been so completely misunderstood. (Eliot 1970:49-50)

Eliot's view that Machiavelli's influence has been somehow irrelevant and trivial accords with Hegel's that "...Machiavelli's voice has died away without effect" (Hegel 1964a:83), in that his true voice has rarely been heard. To achieve a straight picture of the Florentine, one must have the proper context, argues Eliot. In criticising current views of Machiavelli, Eliot comments that

> It is all very well for writers like Lord Morley to present Machiavelli as a stealthy surgeon…caring only for his clinical examination. Morley had not, like Machiavelli, seen his country torn and ravaged, humiliated…by foreign invaders…The humiliation of Italy was to Machiavelli…the origin of his thought and writing. (Eliot 1970b:53)

To understand the historical context was to understand the man and thus form a valid opinion. One is perhaps reminded of "Tradition and the Individual Talent"'s dictum that writers should have the history of Europe in their bones. Linked with this idea of using the historical context for judging Machiavelli, is Eliot's insistence - shared with Hegel - that Machiavelli never intended The Prince to be seen as anything but for Italy. "Machiavelli", he wrote,

> ...is not interested in the modern view of empire; a united Italy was the limit of his vision... (Eliot 1970b:53)

Given that Eliot's and Hegel's arguments over Machiavelli, which do not sit well with the vast majority of literature, I suggest the following. The year 1928 is seminal for Eliot. Not only did it publicly see him as a member of the Church of England and - as a corollary of this - a British citizen, sporting himself as anglo-catholic [sic], royalist and classicist (Eliot 1970:vii), but he also (re)appears as an

Absolute Idealist after apparently eschewing this philosophy. And it was the collection For Lancelot Andrewes which show-cased all these changes in Eliot. As such, it can be seen to act as a kind of hinge in Eliot's writings. The essay "Niccolo Machiavelli", which seems so odd without this dynamic, is the signal that he is (re)adopting Hegelian principles, so closely as to resemble a paraphrase of Hegel's line of thinking (at least in this context). If this line of argument is not accepted, then it remains to be shown why Eliot wrote this strange essay at all. Surely it was not simply to be perverse and controversial. There may well have been a desire to reintegrate Machiavelli into the line of the European tradition, as he had done with the Metaphysical poets, but even if this is the case that he did so in Hegelian terminology is still significant. The question must remain, however, whether Eliot consciously did this, or whether this use of Hegel's arguments was unconscious. Either way, it is still noteworthy. If it were conscious, then it shows a mindful re-adoption of Absolute Idealist ways of thinking. If it were unconscious, the force is hardly abated, as it would suggest that Eliot's stock of Idealist ideas was still intact - and intact to a remarkable degree. The Idea of a Christian Society, to which we will shortly turn, may well exhibit a similar stamp from Hegel's political thought.

Chapter 6. An examination of key concepts in Hegel and Eliot

The examples given above of the Hegelian strand in Eliot would appear to show beyond reasonable doubt that Eliot was both well read in Hegel and that what he read surfaced later both linguistically and in forms of argument. We must now proceed to our central concern, of tracing a possible Hegelian origin for some of the reasoning in Eliot's social criticism, especially The Idea of a Christian Society. Given the problems outlined above, we must proceed with caution, and bear in mind that Hegel's thought is so complex that there would appear to be a variant reading on (it seems) any statement given about his philosophy. Fortunately for us Eliot is not such an idiosyncratic or dense a prose writer. Overall his thought, especially on social issues in our period of enquiry, seems coherent.

I propose to proceed in a straightforward way, that of examining certain key concepts in Hegel's thought to see if Eliot has correlations. The list of concepts is I believe authoritative but not exhaustive. Necessarily, we might well have to exclude to a large extent certain concepts in Eliot's thought which have no apparent parallel in Hegel's system, and vice versa.

6.1 The place and power of ideas in Hegel

This section must be considered as a preliminary discussion of Hegel's use of the term "idea", which cannot be complete until we examine concept of "the Idea". This latter usage Hegel normally reserves for Freedom, and we will discuss this

later. In 6:1, however, it is Hegel's general term "idea" that will occupy us, of which "the Idea" is a particular manifestation.

An idea to Hegel was not a simple concept. It went far beyond a "normal" definition, such as found in dictionaries, for example

> ...the product of mental activity whereby the mind consciously conceives a thought; conception.[21]

For Hegel, "idea" had layers of meaning, and ultimately could be almost described as an organism independent of mind. Given what is Hegel's complex usage of the term, we might begin by conferring with Inwood's A Hegel Dictionary. As Inwood suggests, "Hegel's use of *Idee* [Idea] has several distinctive features." First, it is "not a subjective or mental entity",

> ...it is thus distinct from a representation, and does not contrast with "reality"...The idea is the full realisation or actualisation of a concept... (Inwood 1992:123)

One of the many expressions of this may be seen in one of Hegel's letters:

> Daily do I get more convinced that theoretical work achieves more in the world than the practical. Once the realm of ideas is revolutionised, actuality does not hold out.
> (in McCarney 2000:55)

The world of ideas therefore was not distinct from external reality; it was intrinsically part of it and indeed - in the sense we discussed in Part One - its master. Hegel held that, in "the world" the product of the mind was more influential than the product of the hands.

Although Inwood largely omits the notion of "concept" from his definitions of

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[21] This is from Hanks, P [Ed.], Collins Dictionary of the English Language, 1979.

Hegel's "Idea"[22], in Hegel's use of the word there is a sense in which he does have a category which accords with everyday usage of the word "idea", in that of something limited to mental activity. For Hegel, a concept (*Begriff*) is something which can be defined as "...something abstracted from particulars" (Wood 1991:392), although it has other definitions as well. The "concept", according to Hegel, is "...nothing other than the "I" or pure self-consciousness" (Hegel 1976:583). The concept, in Hegel's dynamics, always strives for objective existence, and when this happens this is called the "idea". The idea, we might see, in Hegel's thought is the incarnated or realised concept - "...the Idea for [Hegel] is strictly the concept together with the reality of the concept" (Inwood, in Hegel 1993:xix). Hegel gives this notion a highlighted place in his works by making it the starting point of his Philosophy of Right:

> The subject-matter of *the philosophical science of right* is the *Idea of right* - the concept of right and its actualisation. Philosophy has to do with Ideas and therefore not with what are described as *mere concepts*.
> (Hegel 1991b:25) [Hegel's Italics]

Although Hegel's usage of the term "concept" has a greater variety and shade of meaning than given here, it is I believe a potentially valid reading of Hegel, and gives us some understanding of Hegel's dynamic of ideas.

Inwood's second definition of Hegel's use of "idea" is a refinement of his first given above, and suggests that

> An idea is not...separate from particulars: it is fully realised in certain types of particulars. (Inwood 1992:124)

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[22] He does, however, have a separate entry for "concept", but it seems to lack references to ideas.

Hegel is keen to see a unity of what is usually seen (following Descartes) to be the distinct "mental" and "physical/external" worlds. Ideas are not separate from actuality; they cannot be examined apart from particular existences in which they are embodied. On this Hegel basis his whole world-view, as instanced in the preface to Philosophy of Right:

> What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational. This conviction is shared by every ingenuous consciousness as well as by philosophy. (Hegel 1991b:20)

Hegel's famous phrase - which he quotes from Phenomenology of Spirit (Hegel 1977:482) - has attracted much attention, some of which is contradictory. It seems that Hegel is suggesting that ideas - that which is rational, i.e. produced by thought - have real existence (i.e. it does not just have "mental" existence as if this were some kind of sub-real world), and what has real existence can be understood by thought. It is a kind of circular argument. For Hegel, the State can be studied because it is the product of ideas - indeed, is the incarnation of ideas - and, in its fullest expression, the State is the expression of the Idea of Freedom, such as *Geist* enjoys. A flavour of this is given in Hegel's comment on the nature of the Napoleonic Spanish Constitution. He criticised Napoleon's attempts at legislating *ex nihilo* for Spain, because by doing so he disregarded centuries of development of *Geist* within Spain. "For a constitution", Hegel suggests,

> is not simply made: it is the work of centuries, the Idea and consciousness of the rational… (Hegel 1991b:313)

Inwood's third definition of the Hegelian "Idea" suggests that

> An idea is not an ideal that we ought to realise: it is actual in the present. (Inwood 1992:124)

We might consider this as connected to the previous two definitions, and in essence it defined Idealism *per se*: to be an "Idealist" in the philosophical sense is not to be interested in *ideals*, but *ideas*. Hegel's Idealism pushes Idea-as-reality to its natural conclusion: ideas *are* reality. Inwood's third definition leads to his fourth and more substantial suggestion, that in Hegel

> Ideas are rational, but they do not simply regulate our understanding of the world: the idea of life, e.g., involves purposeiveness [sic], just as much as mechanistic systems involve causality. (Inwood 1992:124)

Hegel's ideas are not just to do with our *understanding* of the world. They are part of the world. For Hegel, the fundamental idea is *Geist*, the totality of existence, which depends upon nothing else for existence. However, *Geist* is not fully formed: it is developing; its task is to evolve throughout history to its conclusion, self-consciousness.

This is also in Hegel a theological expression. In Lectures, Hegel suggests that the evolution of the Idea is also the evolution of *Geist*:

> God and the nature of his will are one and the same, what we call in philosophy the Idea.
> (Hegel in McCarney 2000:26)

McCarney calls this Hegel's

> ...triple identity, in which "the Idea" figures as the philosophically favoured term for reason and God...the deepest level of [Hegel's] thought... (McCarney 2000:26)

At each stage of its "evolution", however - despite this sounding contradictory - Hegel's Idea as expressed in the State of the nations of world history, is actually a true state.

6.2 The place of ideas in Eliot

Did Eliot's use of the term "idea" have any correlation? Like Hegel, Eliot's use of the word is often layered, befitting a student of philosophy. Unlike Hegel, Eliot could use "idea" in its everyday way, which had few philosophical overtones. This can be seen most clearly in his plays. For example, Colby in The Confidential Clerk says "I've no idea how I ought to behave" (Eliot 1969:450). But we may find uses of "idea" which have a deeper meaning. In The Confidential Clerk, for example, Colby, who is in search of his father, says:

> I've never had a father or mother...
> As for a father -
> I have the idea of a father...
> Whose image I could create in my own mind,
> To live with that image. An ordinary man
> Whose life I could in some way perpetuate
> By being the person he would have liked me to be…
> (Eliot 1969:513)

Although The Confidential Clerk is not a philosophical treatise, it is interesting that Colby uses the word "idea" in this stilted way. He has "the idea of a father", which appears to be something free-standing, and it is an idea which has concreteness about it, for Colby talks of this "idea" of father as though it has actual existence - he wants to live a life which would be pleasing to it.

Interestingly, Eliot's poetry has only three examples of "idea". Two may be seen to be in contrast with Hegel's use of the term, though in different degrees. In the 1925 The Hollow Men, for example, Eliot writes

> Between the idea
> And the reality…
> Falls the shadow
> (Eliot 1969:85)

This appears to suggest a difference between idea and reality, a distinction which Hegel would not recognise. However, in the stanza following is something more akin to Hegel -

> Between the conception
> And the creation…
> Falls the shadow
> (Eliot 1969:85)

- the *concept* precedes the actuality, and becomes such as an idea. However, this is probably over-interpreting the text. An earlier use of "idea" in Eliot's poetry, in the 1917 "Portrait of a Lady", has Eliot using the word in its every-day way:

> I keep my countenance…
> Are these ideas right or wrong?
> (Eliot 1969:20)

The other use comes in the 1934 The Rock, which contains the lines

> O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!
> The endless cycle of idea and action,
> Endless invention, endless experiment...
> (Eliot 1969:147)

and appears to use the word "idea" as contrasting with the world of "action". Surprisingly, given that they are sometimes interpreted as being Eliot's working-out of his personal vision or philosophy, there is no usage of the word "idea" in Four Quartets.

We are therefore obliged to turn to Eliot's prose writings for significant uses of the term. Knowledge and Experience contains philosophical uses of the word. In discussing this, we must always bear in mind Eliot's complex relationship to it, which we shall examine more in Part Three. Suffice it to say here that I believe it remained canonical in Eliot's view.

For Hegel, the dynamic of idea started with the concept. Ideas were, to Hegel, actualisations of concepts. Eliot has a similar way of describing the movement of mental constructs into reality, although his is expressed in terms which had been refined by a study of linguistics and psychology. A concept, Eliot suggests, is

> ...that which a word denotes, and idea...as that which a word refers in reality, this reference being contingent. (Eliot 1964:46)

Although Eliot here is revealing his interest in the role words play in consciousness (an interest only nascent in Hegel), the basic theory in both writers of the concept being a pre-thought existence only in the mental word holds true. In Eliot, it is some kind of inarticulate denotation, in Hegel pure consciousness.

Eliot's meaning of the "idea" is, like Hegel's, complex, although we might say it is somewhat more straightforward than Hegel's. Eliot's fundamental definition of "idea" is stated thus:

> The idea is the total content which we mean about reality, in any particular presentation...furthermore, its meaning partially coincides with the reality which it intends. Nor is the idea purely a logical entity, since it always...comes to occupy a particular place in a real world. (Eliot 1964:40)

Although this is perhaps more tentatively put than Hegel's arguments about the relationship between idea and reality - it "partially coincides with the reality which it intends" - Eliot is nonetheless arguing an Hegelian thesis here, albeit via Bradley. Eliot's idea "always...comes to occupy a particular place in a real world", and this accords with Hegel's statement, given above, that in the face of ideas "actuality does not hold out". Moreover, Eliot sees that although ideas are in part "logical entities" - that is, they exist as pure thought - they are not limited to that sphere. Hegel's ideas

are also not confined to the mental world - "Philosophy has to do with Ideas and therefore not with what are described as *mere concepts*".

Not only do both authors see ideas being part of the "actual" world, both ultimately see reality subsisting as an idea. For Hegel, history is set to see the fulfilment and appearance of "the Idea", *Geist*, and as we saw before "God and the nature of his will are...what we call in philosophy the Idea". For him, the Idea was the whole of existence. Eliot had the same ultimate theory:

> Hence...the idea is the whole reality meant...meaning is ultimately the whole of reality. (Eliot 1964:42)

and

> ...the external world and the mental world are of exactly the same stuff, and are ultimately identical... (Eliot 1964:74)

Despite these similarities, there are however differences between Hegel and Eliot in their consideration of Ideas. For Hegel, there is a great sense of ideas - or at least, *the* Idea - objectively existing in the depths of history. It is society's role to develop and attain this Idea. Except in the Phenomenology of Spirit there is less sense of ideas within individuals. Although this might be simply a matter of a difference of emphasis, Eliot's treatment of ideas in Knowledge and Experience is virtually all individualistic, ultimately giving rise to fears of solipsism in Eliot's philosophical system. For example, "The idea", wrote Eliot,

> ...is that reality which I intend, and the identity is only the assumption of *one* world... (Eliot 1964:43-44)

For Eliot, there has arisen the spectre of multiple worlds. For Hegel, this was not something that appeared of interest.

Knowledge and Experience is of course a highly specialised book and does

not tend to touch upon what chiefly concerns us here, Eliot's social criticism. Are there other instances, then, of Eliot using ideas in a way that is reminiscent of Hegel? In 1926, in his The New Criterion definition of a literary review, "The Idea of a Literary Review", Eliot displays a certain Hegelian stance. Eliot's 1926 statement is worthy of note on two counts. First, Eliot waited until he had been publishing his journal for nearly four years before defining what it was. Thus, we could say, Eliot's "idea" of a journal was what it actually was; it was - in Eliot's words - *the reality which he intended.* Second, he entitled the piece "The *Idea* of a Literary Review", and chose not to use such words as theory, plan, notion, concept, principle, or ideal or any other word which was also applicable. Moreover, the way he defined literary journals in the article was exactly what The New Criterion and its immediate predecessor The Criterion actually was. It had certainly avoided

> ...the temptation ever to appeal to any social, political or theological prejudices... (Eliot 1967va:4)

It had also included

> ...beside "creative" work and literary criticism, any material which should be operative on general ideas…
> (Eliot 1967va:4)

Although it might be said that Eliot was simply redefining the position of The New Criterion over and above that of The Criterion, the only real change was in the title. The contributors remained largely the same, and as Eliot suggested when, a little later, The New Criterion changed again into The Monthly Criterion,

> The Criterion and its successor, The New Criterion, began and continued for four years as a quarterly. It was part of the original programme, in 1922, to revive some of the characteristics of the quarterly reviews of a hundred years ago...

The journal was also to have

> ...a certain corporate personality which had almost disappeared from quarterly journalism…a common tendency which its contributors should illustrate by conformity or opposition...[it] was to be up-to-time in its appreciation of modern literature, and in its awareness of contemporary problems; it was to record the development of modern literature and the mutations of modern thought.
> (Eliot in Ali 1986:71)

Eliot clearly saw The Criterion and The New Criterion as having the same programme. Thus, when he wrote "The Idea of a Literary Review", the "Idea" was already in existence. As Inwood said of Hegel, above: "An idea is not an ideal that we ought to realise: it is actual in the present"; this was certainly true of Eliot's "Idea" of The Criterion in 1926.

This can also be seen in the "Note" Eliot appended to the first volume of The Criterion:

> On the completion of the first volume of The Criterion, it is pertinent to define…the purpose of a literary review…A literary review should maintain the application, in literature, of principles which have their consequences also in politics and in private conduct. (Eliot 1967ra:421)

Eliot thus never intended The Criterion to be hermetically sealed from life; Eliot's journal shared the same principles as political action. In Eliot's words

> It is the function of a literary review to maintain the autonomy and disinterestedness of literature, and at the same time to exhibit the relation of literature - not to "life", as something contrasted to literature, but to all other activities which, together with literature, are the components of "life". (Eliot 1967ra:421)

To re-apply Hegel's definition of philosophy, Eliot's definition of a literary review "was to do with Ideas and therefore not with what are described as *mere concepts*".

The New Criterion in 1926 was what it had been in 1922; and, as published, it was the *idea* of a literary review.

The same kind of relationship between ideas and actuality may perhaps be seen in The Criterion's stance on politics. In 1927, disillusioned with politicians' efforts to deal with issues which culminated in the 1926 General Strike, Eliot wrote in his "Commentary" that

> It is a trait of the present time that every "literary" review worth its salt has a political interest; indeed that *only* [in] the literary reviews...are their [sic] any living political creeds. (Eliot 1967vb:283) [Eliot's Italics]

By the next volume of The Criterion, Eliot's had further advanced his claim to be a politician:

> The man of letters of to-day...finds that the study of his own subject leads him irresistibly to the study of others...Three events in the last ten years may be instanced: the Russian Revolution...the transformation of Italy...and the condemnation of *Action Francaise* by the Vatican. All of these events compel us to consider the problem of Liberty and Authority, both in politics and in the organisation of speculative thought. Politics has become too serious a matter to be left to politicians. (Eliot 1967vc:386)

Not only is this, perhaps, an example of the Absolute Idealist position of "everything is ultimately connected", but it is noteworthy how easily Eliot slips in the above extract from being the "man of letters" to the "amateur economist" who, as "politics and economics can no longer be kept apart", is also a politician. The ideas which form the world of the man of letters are the same ideas which ultimately are actions in the world of politics.

It might be said that Eliot's position in The Criterion is an example of the Hegelian view given above - "Daily [wrote Hegel] do I get more and more

convinced that theoretical work achieves more in the world than the practical." Eliot expressed himself in a similar vein:

> If...there remains any place for quarterly reviews…their task is surely to concern themselves with political philosophy, rather than with politics, and the examination of the fundamental idea of philosophies rather than with the problems of application. (Eliot 1967u:265)

However, we should bear in mind, as Margolis reminds us, of

> ...how little enthusiasm Eliot brought to his new calling...he greeted this expansion of interest almost begrudgingly. (Margolis 1972:76)

as Eliot, ultimately, only wanted to do his service to politics and then

> ...return to our own business, such a writing a poem, or painting a picture. (Eliot 1967vc:387)

Eliot's other great use of the word "Idea" is the title of the 1939 The Idea of a Christian Society, and it is here that we can perhaps see Eliot's nearest approximation to Hegelianism. We have already examined Eliot's statement

> In using the term "Idea" of a Christian Society I do not mean primarily a concept derived from the study of any societies which we may choose to call Christian; I mean something that can only be found in an understanding of the end to which a Christian Society, to deserve the name, must be directed. I do not limit the application of the term to a perfected Christian Society on earth…My concern with contemporary society, accordingly, will not be primarily with specific defects, abuses or injustices but with the question what - if any - is the "idea" of the society in which we live? to what end is it arranged? (Eliot 1939:43)

Eliot's thought here is complex. As we shall see below in Part Three, he borrowed this definition of "idea" from Coleridge, who may well have had Hegelian leanings. But there are other points in Eliot's definition which we must examine. First, he capitalises "Idea" when he refers to it in respect of "Christian Society", much as

Hegel tended to do when he wrote of the "Idea" in its full sense, as in the march of history. Eliot does not usually capitalise a word unless it is a proper noun. This is significant. Secondly, he suggests that by using the word "Idea" he is not meaning a "concept" - another Hegelian distinction. And by using the term "Idea" he is not concerned with some hypothetical society, some "perfected Christian Society on earth", and although he does not explicitly say so in this passage, it might be seen that he is actually concerned in The Idea of a Christian Society about the development of English Society *as it existed*: he is not interested in "specific defects" but with its ultimate aims. Eliot's "Idea", like Hegel's, is engaged with the here and now yet not completely realised. It appears, in 1939, very similar to the description of "idea" which he first wrote in 1916, as quoted above (Eliot 1964:46). Eliot, in The Idea of a Christian Society desires to reform society so that its Idea can be more clearly expressed. Eliot, throughout the work, writes of the "Idea of the Christian Society" as if it were already part existing, and how it can be improved:

> I am here concerned only secondarily with the changes in economic organisation...my primary interest is in...such changes as could bring about anything worthy to be called a Christian Society. (Eliot 1939:45)

Eliot was clear that The Idea of a Christian Society was not pure theory. He asseverated that it "was not a blueprint". It was based upon the existing social and ecclesiastical life of England. "I have...limited my field", wrote Eliot,

> to the possibility of a Christian society in England, and speaking of the Church...it is the Anglican Church I have in mind. (Eliot 1939:70)

This can be seen in his discussion of the principle of unity, which

> ...if the desirability of unity be admitted...then it can only be

> realised, in England, through the Church of England...I am only affirming that it is this Church which, by reason of its tradition...and its relation in the past to the religious-social life of the people, is the one for our purpose...
> (Eliot 1939:71)

Again, Eliot is defining his "Idea" of a Christian Society around what is already existing. Moreover, this "Idea" of a Christian Society is not just the objectification of a concept (in the Hegelian sense) of what society should be in institutions and laws. The "Idea" is also something to be grasped by individuals in society, so that each can be united into a common mind. Christian beliefs and practices were to be taught in an homogeneous education system, which would "...train people to think in Christian categories" (Eliot 1939:57). The result of this would be that "...the Christian faith would be ingrained" in society (Eliot 1939:58), either consciously within the Community of Christians, or "...almost wholly realised in behaviour" by the rest of society (Eliot 1939:57). This Christianity would unite all members so that society's goals might be achieved. The "Idea" being both objectively expressed in the institutions of society and in its subjects, is an Hegelian notion. As Barker suggests,

> Hegel treated the State under the head of objective mind; he spoke of the State as a self-consciousness...An Oxford college is not a group of buildings...it is a group of men...in a sense of a group of minds. That group of minds, in virtue of the common substance of the uniting idea, is itself a group mind. There is no group-mind existing apart from the minds of the member of the group; the group mind only exists in the minds of its members... (Barker 1915:72)

Hence for Eliot, the "Christian mind" of the Christian Society, its "Idea", was also unitative, especially important in the face of Fascism and Communism. As he suggested in The Idea of a Christian Society, the pivotal Community of Christians

were those people who were "possessed of an idea": it inspired everything they did. Eliot's Knowledge and Experience also hinted at this kind of uniting force, when he suggested the necessity of "yoking divers worlds together" in order to make a whole (Eliot 1964:85).

6.3 *Geist*, Freedom, and the Idea

The concept of *Geist* is an essential part of Hegel's whole philosophy, and this in one view cannot be emphasised too strongly. There is another view, however, which takes the opposite line, and some modern critics such as Taylor and Patten are tempted to divest Hegel's work of any such metaphysics. Central as the theory of *Geist* is to Hegel, he rarely defines it, and when he does the definition is, in the words of one critic, brief and "notoriously obscure". It is as though Hegel saw *Geist* as such an obvious constituent of the universe that description was superfluous.

There are two explanations of *Geist* which Eliot noted, in Lectures. By the first, Eliot made the marginal note "Definition of Spirit":

> The nature of God as pure Spirit, is manifested to man *in the Christian Religion.* But what is Spirit? It is the one immutably homogeneous Infinite - pure Identity - which in its second phase separates itself from itself and makes this second aspect its own polar opposite, viz. as existence for and in itself as contrasted with the Universal.
> (Hegel 1905:335-6) [Hegel's Italics]

He also underlined some words in the following passage:

> If Spirit be defined as absolute reflection within itself...it is recognised as *Triune*: the "Father" and the "Son", and that duality which essentially characterises it as "Spirit".
> (Hegel 1905:336)

Eliot also noted two instances of how, in Hegel's mind, *Geist* manifested itself in the particular:

> The Greek Spirit was a consciousness of Spirit, but under a limited form, having the element of Nature as an essential ingredient. (Hegel 1905:331)

Eliot also noted the following;

> ...implicitly and explicitly, then, we have the truth, that man through Spirit - through cognition of the universal and the Particular - comprehends God himself. (Hegel 1905:332)

In Sibree's translation, Eliot would also have come across the following references to *Geist*:

> [Spirit] is entirely individual, active and alive: it is consciousness but also its object - and it is the being of Spirit to have itself as object. (Hegel in McCarney 2000:56)

and

> The next step is that we consider more closely Spirit, which we grasp essentially as consciousness...
> (Hegel in McCarney 2000:56)

and also

> The universal spirit is essentially present as human consciousness...The spirit that knows itself and exists for itself as subject posits itself as immediate and existent: thus it is human consciousness. (Hegel in McCarney 2000:56)

Geist was active in the life of nations:

> [Spirit]...alone propels itself forward in all the deeds of the people. Religion, science, the arts, destinies and events are all forms of its development. (Hegel McCarney 2000:138)

This spirit of a people is "essentially particular", the "universal spirit in a particular form" (Hegel in McCarney 2000:138).

From the above, we might suggest that *Geist* was the fundamental substance of the universe, existing by and for itself. According to the Lectures, *Geist* went through two phases, first of all pure existence, marked by "pure reflection"; second, when it split from itself and became its opposite, when it began its quest for self-fulfilment in the world. At some point it is also individual human consciousness, as well as the life-force active in nations, creating out of them homogeneous groups of people. The primeval splitting of *Geist* created the essential duality, sometimes characterised as the Thesis and Antithesis, in the Dialectic which is at the heart of all Hegelian understanding of the world. Although Hegel's terminology is somewhat recondite, we might see his description of the existence and development of *Geist* as somehow similar to the classic Christian account of the Creation by God, and indeed Hegel, at the end of the second extract which Eliot highlighted, does give it a Trinitarian gloss, although it is hardly the zenith of orthodoxy. Eventually, *Geist*'s goal is to arrive at full consciousness by way of overcoming the oppositions to itself which it meets in the world, but this process is achieved in the form of the fully realised State.

The above might be categorised as a theistic reading of Hegel's account of *Geist*. However, as noted above, "I acknowledge that there are other readings of Hegel on these views" (Brod 1992:7). Copplestone, for example, on his reading of Hegel suggests that *Geist* did *not* have an existence before that of the material world - the world of *Geist* and that of creation are "of one essence and existence" (Copplestone 1957:7:208). There is no creation *ex nihilo*, as in the Biblical tradition. This view may be supported from some of the definitions of *Geist* given

above - it is consciousness, *but also* its object. Again, one is inclined to view Hegel's thought as ambiguous, and that there is a spectrum of valid interpretations. I have tended to fall on the side of the theistic view of Hegel, principally because, I believe, Eliot would have encountered this in his close reading of the Lectures, and indeed he annotated one of the more theistic definitions of *Geist* above. Two recent studies have tended to confirm the ambiguous nature of Hegel's theology. Pinkard in Hegel concludes that Hegel's theory of historical development through *Geist* is "...the history of humanity in its social and political existence, and not a providential tale written by God" (Pinkard 2000:494). Desmond, on the other hand, sees things differently, and suggests that Hegel's *Geist* in its panoramic development "accomplishes God" (Desmond 2003:168), although ultimately Desmond concludes that Hegel's idea of God is a "counterfeit double" (Desmond 2003:173).

Despite these difficulties of interpretation, we might put forward Hegel's theory of *Geist* as something along the following, and this will also be seen to provide us with Hegel's philosophy of Freedom and world history. *Geist* for Hegel was the "...pure Identity" or consciousness (Hegel 1905:335-6), one of the fundamental substances of the universe. As we saw above, although it was pure consciousness, it was not fully *self*-conscious, for to achieve this level *Geist* needed another consciousness or collection of conciousnesses with which to react. Self-consciousness for Hegel relied fundamentally on two or more entities recognising each other as equals. Whether *Geist* created the universe as a theatre in which to achieve this, or acted upon an already existing world, does not in this scheme of

explanation matter; what is essential is the *other* to *Geist*'s pure identity.

The goal of *Geist* being to return to itself as consciousness, it "...separates itself from itself" and immerses itself into the world of human affairs (Hegel 1905:336), seeking other consciousnesses with which to interact. However, the humans it meets first of all in this quest are not fully developed, that is, they do not enjoy that radical Freedom in which they are able to create a world around them of their own devising which reflects their own being back to them. Nor do they live in societies in which Freedom is recognised for everyone. The societies which *Geist* first encounters in the world are like a vast expression of the Master-Slave relationship which Hegel delineated in Phenomenology. Hegel's version of freedom was positive; it was not freedom *from* certain things, merely to live without external pressures, nor even to be able to enjoy liberties such as movement or speech. Hegel's version was one in which humans enjoyed freedom *for* things, that is, self-consciousness and an ability to act from that. Just as the goal for *Geist* was complete self-realisation with absolute freedom, so the goal of humanity was to come to that point of freedom that *Geist* itself enjoyed. This *Geist*-enjoyed freedom Hegel called, simply, "the Idea".

Finding the first societies underdeveloped, *Geist* has to work human society into something like itself, that is, fully conscious and imbued with the Idea of Freedom. Hegel traces this development of the Idea in his Philosophy of World History and also briefly in Philosophy of Right. Successive human societies, as we saw in Part One, grow more and more into the realisation of Freedom. In the earliest of human societies, only one or a few citizens enjoy true freedom; this

number rises as Hegel describes the Greek and Roman worlds, but their practice of slavery ensures that not everyone is free.

The goal of society is embodiment of the Idea in what Hegel terms the "Universal State", that is, one in which all enjoy the benefits which *Geist*-like freedom brings. In this society, each individual member exists in and for himself. He or she is fully self-realised and self-conscious and enjoys these qualities in the same way as *Geist*, by being embodied in a vast web of inter-relationships in which that self-realisation is recognised by all others.

This story of the evolution of society along with that of the self-realisation of *Geist* provides Hegel with both a philosophy of history and theory of humanity. Hegel's anthropology might be described in the following way. What made human beings unique in the world of creatures was that they possessed *Geist*, with its faculty of reason. But in possessing *Geist* they needed to become self-realised in a free world in which they were recognised as such. To be anything less was to be alienated. People needed to create a world of their own devising which would reflect back to them their true selves, like *Geist*. This is the spring for Hegel's theory of art and religion and all other expressions of humanity. By engaging in acts of creation, people worked out their self-realisation, objectifying it in the world. In these works *Geist* too was developed. The development of *Geist* both in itself and in individuals was thereby a community process: relying on the recognition of others, it was a *sine qua non* of the growth of freedom.

The development of Freedom, therefore, was the story of *Geist*'s involvement in human societies which were themselves involved in the same process. It was a

wheel within a wheel, the end product of which was the fully formed Hegelian State, embodying the Idea. Being essentially a community effort, every human was involved in *Geist*'s development. *Geist*'s evolution entailed a flowering of human nature; the history of *Geist* was the history of everything, a universal history. It also had a definite goal, a *telos*, that of the true State, and this goal was to be achieved within the realm of human history. Essentially, the fundamentals of Hegel's philosophy (when one has accepted his terminology) is in one sense simple: it is a story of *Geist*'s quest for self-realisation and the story of humanity's involvement in it both for *Geist* and for human society.

Given this, we turn to Eliot's work, and ask whether we can possibly see any correlation between that and Hegel's theory of *Geist*? Was Eliot's social theory, or indeed any part of his work, imbued with the theory of *Geist*, or was Hegel's metaphysics to Eliot like it was to Taylor - "bizarre" and "incredible"? We might suggest that Eliot - whose "monstrous and corrupt" Hegel one might begin to see in his "incredible" metaphysical conceptions - did not share such a vision of the grand working out in history of some (in pejorative terms) nebulous *Geist*.

6.4 Eliot and *Geist*

If we take the theistic reading of Hegel as unlikely, then we would surely be bound to suggest that Eliot was not influenced by Hegel's *Geist*, which was open to accusations of pantheism - a charge which Hegel vigorously denied. Eliot, we can reasonably be sure, was orthodox in his theology of Creation. However, if we lean more to the theistic side of the interpretation, then Hegel's influence might be

admitted, as it perhaps accorded more with Christian doctrine. Even here, though, there is a marked difference between Hegel's thought and dogma as Eliot would have understood it. God had no need of "self-fulfilment" in Christian accounts of the universe.

Even given this, we should not conclude that *Geist* could not have been appropriated by Eliot. Outside our main text The Idea of a Christian Society, there is a point at which we might see vestiges of a kind of *Geist*. Notably, it originates in the period when Eliot was going through his putative "scientific" stage of criticism (see Part Three). This possible Hegelianism is concealed in Eliot's conception of the "mind of Europe" and the doctrine of Tradition that accompanies it, as discussed above. As these schemes are closely related, there will be a certain overlap in the following discussion.

Eliot first uses the term "mind of Europe" in the 1919 “Tradition and the Individual Talent”. Eliot argues for the existence of and the adherence to the concept of "the tradition" of European literature. Hitherto, he argued, the notion of "tradition" has been rather negative:

> In English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence...If otherwise, it is…approbative, with the implication...of some pleasing archaeological reconstruction. (Eliot 1932f:13)

Tradition, however, is something more dynamic and alive, relating the living writer to his forebears. These predecessors form a sort of union, a mind, which the living writer can come to know. Eliot suggests:

> ...(the poet) can neither take the past as a lump...nor…form himself wholly upon one preferred period...He must be quite aware…that art never improves, but that the material of art is

never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe - the mind of his own country - a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind - is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*...this development, refinement perhaps...is not...improvement...But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show. (Eliot 1932f:16)

This fundamental need to grasp the "mind of Europe" - which Eliot seems to believe encompasses Greece as well - is not a matter of intellectual endeavour, or as Eliot suggests "much learning". To have the mind of Europe is more: it is - and this is the important point, which perhaps links Eliot with Hegel - a matter of developing the *consciousness* of the past:

> What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop a consciousness of the past...What happens is a continual surrender of himself...to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. (Eliot 1932f:17)

Thus for Eliot, this attaining the "mind of Europe" is no historical or archaeological delving. It is the process of developing a consciousness of a living substance, or attaining a relationship with that living past. This European mind is greater than the individual mind of the artist which must surrender to the greater. There are several Hegelian overtones here. One might recall that for Hegel *Geist* was defined as "consciousness"; and as the human mind was also for Hegel a manifestation of *Geist* - "the universal spirit is essentially present as human consciousness" - then Eliot's prescription that the artist's mind must develop a consciousness of the European mind through its past, has an echo of Hegel's words which, as we saw above, it can be proved that Eliot read and noted. This is further corroborated with Hegel's own

belief that *Geist* itself was the primal mover in art:

> ...[*Geist*]...propels itself forward in all the deeds...of the people. Religion, science, the arts...are all forms of its development. (Hegel 1991a:46)

Admittedly there are differences between Eliot's "European Mind" and Hegel's *Geist*. Eliot's is a European mind, and not a Universal Mind, although we might suggest that Hegel, ultimately, was more interested in *Geist*'s European manifestation as it tended in that continent to approach its self-realisation. Hegel, like Eliot, is unashamedly Eurocentric. Another difference of emphasis is that while *Geist* tends to develop all things, consciousness of Eliot's European mind does not bring "improvement" as such; art, in Eliot's doctrine, does not "improve", although there is some movement forward admitted, in that it might be "refined"; moreover, the present manifestation of the European mind is somewhat *greater* than it was in the past for it also has the sum of its past included in the present - the *mass* of the European mind is increased. Another difference is that *Geist* is active in all branches of society's endeavours, whereas Eliot's appears, in this context, confined to literature.

Eliot appeared consistent in his "European mind" theory throughout his career. He always attempted to enlarge his consciousness of European heritage, and through this individual endeavour the consciousness of society as well. The re-appraisal of the English Metaphysical poets is a good example, as is the essay on Andrewes and Hooker in For Lancelot Andrewes. Notably, in these Eliot is at pains to stress the European nature of these writers, with special reference to Dante, who was in Eliot's mind the doyen of European-ness.

Are there *Geister* to be found in The Idea of a Christian Society? Although perhaps not as explicit as the dynamic role of tradition and the European mind in "Tradition and the Individual Talent", there are some attributes of our 1939 text which might be Hegelian. There is a strong sense within the book of *l'esprit d'Anglais*, the English character. This might well be the main reason why Eliot sees his work as applying *only* to England, which otherwise might seem eccentric or super-nationalist. He can only suggest things for the English, he says:

> But if what I say…has…direct application only in England, it is not because I am thinking of local matters...It is partly that I can only discuss…the situations with which I am most familiar...I have therefore limited my field to the possibility of a Christian society in England, and in speaking of Church and State it is the Anglican Church that I have in mind…If the idea of a Christian society be grasped…then it can only be realised, in England, through the Church of England...I am only affirming that it is this Church which, by reason of its tradition, its organisation, and its relation in the past to the religious-social life of the people, is the one for our purpose... (Eliot 1939:70-71)

It is the unique character of the English situation that Eliot is dealing with, the *Englishness* of England, we might say. It is very different, he argues, from the situation as found in Wales, although Eliot knew that Wales was politically part of the same unit, as was (although with certain differences) Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, these four provinces of Britain were different, Eliot argued. This can be seen in Eliot's discussion of the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. Such moves to Disestablishment of the Church in one province of Britain cannot, he argues, be applied to the other parts:

> Apart from the differences of racial temperament which must be taken into account, the full effect of Disestablishment cannot be seen from the illustration of a

> small part of the island... (Eliot 1939:73)

Wales cannot be compared to England because its people are *racially* different. We should not here impugn Eliot with racism. That would be anachronistic. In Eliot's day, "race" could be used by some writers (as diverse as T E Lawrence and Robert Cude, of the East Kent Regiment in the Great War) as an interchangeable word with "nation"[23]. Moreover, in discussing Murry's contribution to the debate between "Romantic" and "Classical" attitudes in literature, Eliot in the 1923 "The Function of Criticism" suggested that the debate had become "...a national, a racial issue" (Eliot 1932f:26). It seems that for Eliot the words "race" and "nation" were synonymous. And so in discussing Disestablishment, Eliot suggests that Wales and England are two different nations, with different circumstances. Like the Hegelian concept of nations - groups of people in whom *Geist* has manifested itself in a particular way - Eliot's England and Wales are almost foreign to each other. That they shared a common language - at least in most of the area - and in part a common history is no matter for Eliot: they are different people with different mores. This sense of the underlying spirit of a nation comes across strongly in a discussion Eliot has on national identity earlier in the work. "You cannot", he wrote,

> expect continuity and coherence in politics...unless there is an underlying political philosophy: not of a party, but of the nation. (Eliot 1939:67)

This "underlying political philosophy" was fundamental to the nation's character,

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[23] Lawrence uses the word "race" as an equivalent for "nation" in Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Cude wrote after seeing a German's death in the Somme: "It was a...cheering spectacle...I set my thoughts on...the extermination *of the whole race*" (Brown 2001:191) [My Italics].

and as we saw above "nation" was a distinct group of people knit together by a common culture. In being concerned with "the nation", Eliot is perhaps here broadening his concerns with tradition from his earlier, purely literary perspective as in "Tradition and the Individual Talent". The "nation" would comprise *all* that went on in the state, and not just the arts, as Eliot himself suggests in the above text. Eliot's "nation" in The Idea of a Christian Society comes to appear like Hegel's *Volk*, a group of people sharing the same social, political and cultural ideas (the same "social-religious life"), and as such it is also a manifestation of *Geist*.

Despite similarities between Hegel's *Geist* and some elements of Eliot's ideology, overall we cannot truly equate Eliot's vision for humanity and the society in which it lived with *Geist*. Fundamental to Hegel's theory was *Geist*'s splitting from itself and immersing itself in the world of human affairs in order to come to a *telos* - self-fulfilment for itself and humanity in the rational State. There is no such undertaking in Eliot's work. Eliot's society, at least as expressed in The Idea of a Christian Society, is not in the process of evolving towards Freedom along with a cosmic agency. It is static; it has no "goal" towards which it must develop, and nor has it "evolved" from any kind of former state. Eliot sees the Christian state as free-standing, a-historical, almost, and this is far from Hegel's story of human society. *Geist* - even if we put the most orthodox gloss on Hegel - is far from Eliot's God, that of Christian orthodoxy - involved in the world in the person of Christ, but in no way involved in a process of self-realisation. Christian dogma accords God self-realisation as one of his fundamental characteristics; it is neither enhanced nor diminished by God's action in the world. Moreover, the concept of the "Idea" in

Hegel's account of *Geist*, is also missing in Eliot to a large extent - this will be discussed in detail below.

6.5. The Idea of Freedom and Hegel's Society

In Hegel's politics, a starting point is the concept of "the Idea". This in Hegel is closely linked to *Geist*. As we saw above, *Geist* is involved in a process of self-realisation in human history. World history, therefore, was on a march towards freedom, which Hegel described in the image of Master and Slave in Phenomenology. This concept of freedom Hegel called "the Idea", and all of human history had it as its goal. Ultimately, freedom was to be embodied in the State. Overall, Hegel's theory of politics is *Geist*'s development in human affairs, how society incarnated the concept of freedom which enabled *Geist* to be fulfilled.

There is a problem of semantics to overcome before we proceed. The essential point is that the terms "State" and "Society" meant something different to Hegel, and to Eliot, than they tend to do to us in the twenty-first century, and it is prudent to keep these differences in mind when we come to examine the texts.

It is important for us to recognise the historical complexity which was the context of Hegel's political writing. Hegel's Germany, although linked more or less by common language and culture, was politically divided into many states, in which different legislations and powers were in force. This often led to weakness, as in the Napoleonic era. There was no cohesion between the German states and common policy was difficult to achieve. Hegel tackled this problem in his German

Constitution, which has been discussed above in relation to Machiavelli. Essentially, Hegel wished for the unification of German States, just as Machiavelli desired a stronger Italy. As Avineri suggests,

> The dissolution which [had] taken hold of Germany [was] fraught with dangers. The disappearance of the common bond…pushed men into an atomistic isolation…
> (Avineri 1972:54)

Hegel wrote in The German Constitution

> The German people may be incapable of intensifying its obstinacy to particulalrism to that point of madness reached by the Jewish people - a people incapable of uniting in common life with any other...Nevertheless, particularism [sic] has prerogative…in Germany.
> (Hegel in Avineri 1972:54)

To understand Hegel's concerns with German atomism, which became obvious in the Napoleonic era, is to go far in understanding Hegel's politics. Hegel's attitude to the French Revolution, which ultimately led to the demise of old Germany, was not however negative. He drank a toast to it on Bastille Day every year (Pinkard 2000:451) and admired it in as much as it brought the "bright dawn" of human freedom and abstract right into feudal Europe, against which the Ancien Regimes could not stand. The Revolution's excesses, however, Hegel denigrated. Eliot, we might suggest, did not share Hegel's enthusiasm for the Revolution's better qualities.

This might allay the problems we may have in comprehending Hegel's position *vis-à-vis* the common conception of the state, which might still be defined by Weber's classic suggestion that it is the authority that claims a monopoly on violence. As Woods suggests

> Since Hobbes, the state has been conceived mainly as a *coercive* institution: for conservatives a preserver of order, for liberals a protector of rights, for radicals a promoter of ruling class interests, but always…an enforcer.
> (Woods 1993:230)

Hegel's theory of the State was much richer than these views. But yet another difficulty arises for us: as McCarney suggests, Hegel's use of "State" was not consistent in its meaning, and we must note

> ...how varied are Hegel's use of the term "state" by the usual standards of [his] time... (McCarney 2000:156)

He goes on to say that

> It seems that one may speak of a less and a more comprehensive sense of the term. In the narrow sense, the state is the political and legal framework…In a wider… sense, the state incorporates a range of spiritual phenomena, including religion, science and art...The sense is never clearly defined…and it may be pointless to seek for it a sharper outline than he provides. The state in the wider sense may well be one of those useful, but inherently vague notions that are distorted in being made more precise...
> (McCarney 2000:167)

Before examining Hegel's theory, we might preface the whole discussion by suggesting that Hegel did not see the state, like Hobbes, as a necessary yet artificial construction. He saw it as a natural and organic phenomenon, in which humans were social animals and their relationships formed natural nexuses. The state, on one level, was part of human biology. Indeed, Hegel often speaks of the state as being an "organism", not only in being "...a self-knowing…individual" (Barker 1915:73) but also, in the context of how it might be damaged by individuals who, if alienated from its institutions, might "...become a massive power in opposition to the organic state" (Hegel 1991b:342). This opposition was dangerous, wrote Hegel,

spreading like cancer through the body politic:

> If opposition does make its appearance…the state is close to destruction. (Hegel 1991b:342-343)

And so what was Hegel's theory of the State? On one level - and here we meet the complexity of Hegel's thought - Hegel *does* suggest that the State is a simple organisation with a straightforward task. In The German Constitution, for example, he suggests that the State is primarily for the defence of its members:

> The health of the state is generally revealed not so much in the calm of peace as in the stir of war...in war the power of association of all with the whole is evident.
> (Hegel 1964a:141)

The "actual readiness for common action and common defence", as Avineri suggests (Avineri 1972:41), was one of the key moments of Hegel's State. The old German Empire, Hegel suggests in The German Constitution, failed as a State because it could not protect its members from aggression. However, although Hegel's State fundamentally is an association for the protection of liberties, it is much more. How the State goes about its associations is more complicated than simply a military co-operative.

Hegel's theory of the State was one which, at inception, was new and based on different principles from what had preceded. As Brod suggests, in constructing his theories Hegel

> ...rejected as…foundation[s] of political theory an appeal to tradition…as in the patriarchialist tradition of paternal authority…or an appeal to religion, as in…the Divine Right of Kings...Only universal principles rationally arrived at could satisfy the demands of modern political consciousness.
> (Brod 1992:30)

For Hegel, the state was a rational entity. It was created by and could be

comprehended by reason, because political society can only exist if knit together by shared norms and these cannot be wholly external. There were no institutions which were based on precedent; the state was a reasoned structure, and as such - and this is a key to understanding Hegel's insistence that the state as a whole and the individual within it could be one - every individual with the gift of reason (i.e. everyone, Hegel seems to assume) could comprehend it, know it to be reasonable and act with it rationally. As Hegel outlined in the introduction to Philosophy of Right,

> This treatise, in so far as it deals with political science, shall be nothing other than an attempt to *comprehend and portray the state as an inherently rational entity.*
> (Hegel 1991b:21) [Hegel's Italics]

The state in being rational was not just a human creation: it was the manifestation of *Geist*, Reason itself, and for that alone it deserved from its citizens

> ...their ultimate allegiance because it [was] the expression of the very foundation of things, the Concept.
> (Taylor 1979:80)

The state was not just theoretical, however. It affected life at every level. To be rational in Hegel's scheme of things was not just to be level-headed; it was to be also *ethical*. And the state, as rational entity, was also ethical:

> Ethical life is the *Idea of freedom*…and its actuality through self-conscious action...Ethical life is accordingly the *concept of freedom which has become the existing world...*
> (Hegel 1991b:189) [Hegel's Italics]

It is clear from this that Hegel's ethics are richer than that which normally pass for such, and this will be discussed later in the examination of *Sittlichkeit.* Suffice it to say here that Hegel's ethics comprehended the actions, beliefs, thoughts and mores of the state's inhabitants, individually and corporately. In a real way, ethical life *was*

the state: "The state in and for itself is the ethical whole..." (Hegel 1991b:279). Hegel's State was not just a part of its citizens' lives. At a profound level, it *was* their lives. Everything that each citizen did and thought, was part of the State. We should not, however, see this as some kind of totalitarian regime. Here, the will and thought of individuals were *controlled* by an outside force which was the State. In Hegel, the people themselves were the State, voluntarily associating themselves with one another. The citizens of the State were able to do this without the need for exterior compulsion to conform because, as we saw above, the State was *rational*, and it was the natural end of humans to live together in a State, in order to gain freedom. The State needed to be a rational entity because its end was rational, i.e. the realisation of freedom. As Pinkard suggests,

> World history is...fundamentally about the development of the "Idea" of freedom, that is, our collective and individual grasp of the normative "whole" in terms of which freedom is both intelligible to us and "actual" (in Hegel's sense) for us. (Pinkard 2000:491)

Although Hegel saw the State as a unity, it did admit of degrees within its organisation. Society was tripartite. These parts were: 1. the family; 2. civil society; and 3. the State. These marked a progression from basic human nature to the fulfilment of the Idea in human society. Each individual belonged biologically to the level of family, and then by process of education, employment and needs became a member of civil society. The end and final movement of the individual was to become a member of the State, which was the ultimate expression of humanity and *Geist*.

Hegel had an Aristotelian view of the family. It was for both authors the

building block of the state, what Brod calls "...the most immediate, natural form of association" (Brod 1992:62). Hegel defines the family in the following terms:

> The family, as the *immediate substantiality* of spirit, has as its determination the spirit's *feeling* of its own unity, which is *love*. Thus, the disposition is to have self-consciousness of one's own individuality *within this unity* as essentially which has being in and for itself, so that one is present in it not as an independent person but as a *member*.
> (Hegel 1991b:199) [Hegel's Italics]

Love, according to Hegel, is "...the consciousness of my unity with another" (Hegel 1991b:199). The family provided that moment in society where the individual realises that it is by *association* that he or she has social existence - as an individual "I would feel deficient and incomplete" (Hegel 1991a:199). Hegel's whole political theory rests upon the concept of association, and it is in the family that persons learn this. This association provides a distinct "ethical life", characterised by the rite of marriage, and by what Hegel calls the "external existence" of "...the *property* and *assets* of the family" (Hegel 1991b:200).

However, the family is not sufficient for society's development, for it is a self-contained unit with members living and working for each other; there is no link in family life between different groups. These groups act like atomistic individuals. The association of persons within a family, Hegel suggests, has ultimately to be *dissolved* in order for its members to achieve a higher political plane, that of Civil Society. (Here, Hegel is not intimating that the marriage bond has to be broken in this move to Civil Society. He is suggesting instead that the *boundaries of association* have to be expanded from the limits of family to those of society in general. Hegel's citizens would always belong to a family group, but not

exclusively.) This movement from family to civil society was a natural process, which Hegel described as "...the bringing up of children and the dissolution of the family" (Hegel 1991b:200). It was not an artificial act. In Hegel's words,

> The family disintegrates in a natural manner...into a *plurality* of families whose relation to one another is in general that of...an external kind. (Hegel 1991b:219)

For Hegel, the family was essentially a *process*, that of raising children and, by virtue of the family wealth, endowing the individual with property and hence - in Hegelian terms - personality.

The dissolution of the family, in Brod's words, released

> ...that propertied individual who serves as a foundation for modern political theory. (Brod 1992:64)

Hegel described the product of family as "the concrete person", who is "particular", "...a totality of needs and...mixture of...necessity and arbitrariness...", who is nevertheless "...*one principle* of Civil Society" (Hegel 1991b:220). That individual was not like Hobbes', however, for through family's educative process he has an ethical nature which gives a "...predisposition to think of [himself] as a part of a larger social unit" (Brod 1992:65).

The next stage of society is Civil Society, where the fully-formed individuals produced by the family form a larger social bond. This level of society is one based on *need*. The "particular persons", wrote Hegel,

> ...stand essentially in *relation* to other similar particulars, and their relation is such that each asserts itself and gains satisfaction through the others.
> (Hegel 1991b:220) [Hegel's Italics]

If the family can be described as a self-contained, self-interest group, intent on its

own welfare and equipping members with property and personality, then Civil Society can be described as a half-way house between that self-interest and what Hegel termed the "universal", that is the full realisation of inter-dependency and unity in society which is the State. "Civil Society", wrote Hegel,

> is the [stage of] difference which intervenes between the family and the state... (Hegel 1991b:220)

although he insists that the State must pre-exist Civil Society, or else there could be no graduation. Like the family, Civil Society is a sphere of learning, that of individuals understanding the necessity of the universal. In Hegel's words,

> In civil society, each individual is his own end...But he cannot accomplish the full extent of his ends without reference to others...through [this] reference...the particular end takes on the form of universality and gains satisfaction by simultaneously satisfying the welfare of others...[civil society] is the sphere of mediation in which all individual characteristics...are liberated...
> (Hegel 1991b:220-221) [Hegel's Italics]

A movement occurs, from self-interested individual emerging from family, to self-interested individual who learns that this interest is best served in relationship with others who are not his family. However, this relationship is still based on need and requires development for it to become universal, the embodiment of Idea. In Civil Society, as Patten suggests,

> ...the universal is an unintended consequence of the actions of agents for whom the particular is the primary...factor.
> (Patten 1999:18)

The State, as this suggests, is the sphere of social life where "...agents consciously have the universal as their end and goal" (Patten 1999:172). The universal, Patten suggests, is that which is

> ...good for all free and rational agents...Obvious candidates for universal good, in Hegel's philosophy, include the goods associated with...art, religion and philosophy.
> (Patten 1999:171)

Hegel's citizens in the "external state" of civil society have to learn by process of "cultural education" (*Bildung*) the importance of these universals and the need to advance towards full membership of the state proper.

Civil Society was the arena for society's economic and administrative life. In Philosophy of Right, for example, Hegel describes the workings of employment, justice and what he terms the "implementation of external order" within the section devoted to Civil Society. All these parts of society are based on need in the "external state" but which help individuals become aware of the universal. Work begins by being a means to an end. Hegel describes it:

> The mediation whereby appropriate and *particularised* means are acquired and prepared for similarly *particularised* needs is *work*. (Hegel 1991b:233) [Hegel's Italics]

However, this process of manufacture and consumption ultimately leads the participating agents into universal thoughts:

> In this dependence and reciprocity of work and the satisfaction of needs, *subjective selfishness* turns into a *contribution towards the satisfaction of the needs of everyone else*. (Hegel 1991b:233) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel further subdivides the arena of work into three *estates*. These are not simply divisions of labour. They are "...divided this way...in accordance with the concept", that is, the concept of freedom (Hegel 1991a:237). Each estate embodies freedom in a particular way and there appears a natural progression from first to third. These Hegel describes in typically abstruse ways:

> The estates are determined, in accordance with the *concept*, as the *substantial* or immediate estate, the reflecting or *formal* estate, and lastly, the *universal* estate.
> (Hegel 1991b:234) [Hegel's Italics]

The first of the estates "...has its resources in the natural products of the *soil* which it cultivates" (Hegel 1991b:234). It is agricultural, entwined with the rhythm of the seasons, and is, Hegel suggests, "...the proper beginning and foundation of states" (Hegel 1991b:234). The second estate, the "reflecting or *formal* estate", is trade and industry. Hegel gives it these rather peculiar names because

> ...the *estate of trade and industry* has the task of *giving form* to natural products, and it relies on its livelihood on its *work*, on *reflection* and understanding, and essentially on its mediation of the needs and work of others.
> (Hegel 1991b:236) [Hegel's Italics]

The first two estates, Hegel suggests, are different levels in human development. The first is rural, and because of its ties with the organic world

> ...has little need to think for itself: what it gains is an alien gift…of nature. This feeling of dependence is fundamental to it…The first estate is therefore more inclined to subservience, the second to freedom.
> (Hegel 1991b:237)

The second estate had "arisen mainly in towns". Although Hegel makes no formal connection between the second and third estates, one is perhaps tempted to suggest that the latter, the "universal estate", develops from the former:

> The *universal estate* has *the universal interests* of society as its business. It must therefore be exempted from work…either by having private resources, or by receiving an indemnity from the state…so that the private interest is satisfied through working for the universal.
> (Hegel 1991b:237) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel, later in Philosophy of Right, equates the universal estate with the civil

service, that branch of government which has the task of

> ...upholding...legality and the *universal interest of the state*... (Hegel 1991b:329) [Hegel's Italics]

Clearly Hegel's definition of "civil servant" is wider than currently used, and its broad definition could also include teachers and clergy. Perhaps Hegel's "universal estate" lies behind Coleridge's idea of "clerisy", and Coleridge's putative Hegelianism we shall examine in Part Three.

Justice also belongs to Civil Society, as it is essentially about the resolution of conflicts between different parties - "...through the administration of justice, *infringements* of property or personality are annulled" (Hegel 1991b:260). Hegel suggests that:

> ...it is through the system of particularity that right becomes externally necessary as a protection for particular interests. (Hegel 1991b:240)

These laws, although universal in nature in that they embody reason, have to be applied to the complicated arena of civil society. These laws are applied

> ...to the *material* of civil society - to its relationships and varieties of property and contracts in their endlessly increasing diversity... (Hegel 1991b:244) [Hegel's Italics]

Civil Society is a system of relationships between groups. Although it is a stage further in the development of society than family, it is - apart from the universal estate, an anomaly which Hegel does not clear up - still a system of self-interests:

> ...civil society is the field of conflict in which the private interest of each individual comes up against that of everyone else... (Hegel 1991b:329)

and

> ...civil society [is where] the Idea has lost itself in

particularity... (Hegel 1991b:259)

There are two ways in which civil society, in Hegel's scheme, progresses to the universal State. The first is what Hegel calls "the Police", or rather the External Authority of the state, the means by which it implements universal interests over particular:

> ...in so far as the principle by which this or that end is governed is still that of the particular will, that authority of the universal which guarantees security remains...an external order. (Hegel 1991b:259)

The police are also there to prevent the different estates of society from coming into conflict:

> The differing interests of producers and consumers may come into collision with each other, and even if, *on the whole*, their correct relationship re-establishes itself automatically, its adjustment also needs to be consciously regulated by an agency which stands above both sides. (Hegel 1991b:260-261) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel's "police", therefore, encompasses not just agents of law, but also what we might call today arbitration services, and perhaps also agencies like social services. The police in Philosophy of Right exist to ensure the smooth operating of civil society, preventing the estates from coming into conflict, and thereby turning their natural inclinations to particularity into those of the universal. The police help turn civil society into the Hegelian state by means of active intervention in an external manner.

The second way this process is implemented is by that which Hegel termed the Corporations. These groups - or associations, Hegel's preferred term, hinting at their cohesive function - are primarily based upon trades which the citizens practise.

The Corporations are therefore firstly instruments of *particularity*, as at one level they exist to serve the needs of a specific group of people; their ends are - to some extent - "selfish" (Hegel 1991b:270). Corporations are to be "second families" to members, giving them security and recognition within society (Hegel 1991b:271). However, Corporations are more than a Trade's Union or medieval guild. Their function is also educational and cultural, making Corporations agents for universality. Members of corporations have responsibility for someone (we might call them apprentices) outside their biological family; this itself engenders a form of universality, for the master in teaching his apprentice has to look to the good of another. The corporation also has responsibility for keeping its trade in order for society's good. What started as a trades' self-interest group flowers into a union of men who, in preserving their skills for successive generations, serve wider society. Another universalising aspect of the corporation is that in granting membership to properly qualified people, it provides members with what Hegel terms the sense of being "*somebody*" (Hegel 1991b:271). They have status and recognition. This is crucial in the Hegelian system: being recognised in broader society is a way by which citizens see themselves as part of the whole. As Hegel puts it,

> In this way [i.e. by being recognised by the Corporation], it is also recognised that he [i.e. the skilled tradesman] belongs to a whole which is itself a member of society in general…Thus, he has *his honour in his estate.*
> (Hegel 1991b:271) [Hegel's Italics]

The corporations are also microcosms of society. They foster selfless work, and in running internal organisations their members are given what Brod calls "...a concrete political education" (Brod 1992:112). This can then be transferred to the

State as a whole. As Brod comments,

> Corporations can play [a] key integrating role [in political life] because they are simultaneously situated at the apogee of...civil society and at the perigees of the orbit of the universal interests of the state... the corporations play an essential role in investing private interests with a public character... (Brod 1992:113-114)

Patten concurs:

> [Hegel] views [the corporation] as a transitional institution between the market economy and the state. The corporation orientates its members to a common good...
> (Patten 1999:187)

Perhaps the closest correlation in British history is the Working Men's education movement, with its libraries and evening schools (in which Eliot himself was a teacher in 1919). However, whilst the British model was restricted largely to the labouring classes, and was voluntary, Hegel's system is not so class-based. Everyone who possesses a skilled trade is expected to belong to a Corporation:

> ...and the member of civil society, in accordance with his particular skill, is a member of a corporation...
> (Hegel 1991b:270)

Labourers and women, however, are excluded. Hegel does not appear to give much thought to those outside Corporations, and these seem to be left out of the movement in society towards universality. Perhaps this is one reason (although not articulated as such) why Hegel did not see corporations as the final stage in the emergence of the rational State. Their ends are not entirely universal, as they also exist to promote particular interests of their craft groupings. Their ends remain, in Hegel's words, "limited and finite" (Hegel 1991b:273), and even the "common interests" of the corporations are likely to be "*particular*" (Hegel 1991b:229). The

corporations on their own would not be able to resolve these potential conflicts with the universal, which has to have its embodiment in the State. The link between the corporations and the State is not clearly defined by Hegel. There is not some institutional progress between corporation and State. It is more an attitude of mind that creates the State. The corporations might be seen as a ladder, the bottom rung of which is in the mire of civil society, and up which the members ascend by looking to the good of other members, and society as a whole through the perpetuation of their own trade, and by their "concrete political education", to the upper strata of the universal, where each member of society is seen to be connected with every one else in a web of relationships and recognitions. However, given Hegel's innate suspicion of civil society, one cannot be sure in Philosophy of Right whether the corporations would ever be able to provide enough universally-minded members to form the State. Corporations, it seems, always taint their members with some form of particularity, and this has led to the situation where, in Brod's words,

> ...the precise nature of the relationship between civil society and the state difficult to grasp. (Brod 1992:96)

Hegel himself only gives a brief hint of the transition:

> The end of the corporation…has its truth in the end which is universal in and for itself and in the absolute actuality of this end...The sphere of civil society thus passes over into the *state.* (Hegel 1991b:273) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel's theory of the State, as noted briefly above, is *organicist*. It cannot be legislated for; it has to grow naturally out of the spirit of a people and out of that *Geist* comes closer to self-realisation. As Wood comments, the life of the state

> ...is a well-constituted ethical life, which integrates the right of persons and subjects into an organic system of customs

> and institutions providing individuals with concretely fulfilling lives. (Wood 1991:xvi)

The lives of the citizens constitute the state; essentially the state is therefore biological (as we shall see through the life of the monarch, below), and a living community. There is no state outside the lives of its constituent members. It is not something *manufactured* by human beings. For Hegel, we must call the life of the citizens a state in the same way that we call an ant-hill a society run by, made up of, and run for a community of ants. As Weil suggests, politics is essentially

> ...the whole science of the common life shared by the political animal known as man... (Weil 1998:29)

Although Hegel refers to society as an organism, it is different in kind from the rest of the natural world. The state is not an organism in the same way as a kangaroo, nor organic in exactly the same way as an ant-hill. What marks it out as different - as human kind is different - is reason. This faculty makes humans moral, in that they are *conscious* of their actions and can interpret them, unlike animals which act on instinct. However, this difference does not divorce human affairs from the natural world; it only develops the natural world into another sphere, wherein *Geist* can come to fulfilment.

Hegel consistently sees society as organic. In describing the power of the sovereign, Hegel suggests that it is "the moment of individuality" in the state, when the king as an individual performs an act which also has a universal significance: he is acting also in the totality of the state, and his actions include all others in society.

Hegel calls this representative mode the *spiritual* nature of society. Thus

> the state, as spiritual in character, is the exposition of all its moments, but individuality is at the same time its inner soul

and animating principle... (Hegel 1991b:313-314)

It would be wrong, I would suggest, to think that Hegel was using the terms *inner soul* and *animating principle* as figures of speech; for Hegel, this kind of terminology denoted reality, not metaphor. This can be seen in Hegel's discussion of the Estates. He examines the idea "...that *all* individuals ought to participate in deliberations and decisions", and sees that it seeks to

> implant in the organism of the state a *democratic* element *devoid of rational form*, although it is only by its rational form that the state is an organism.
> (Hegel 1991b:347) [Hegel's Italics]

The state was a living thing; it was also rational; and being rational was its mode of being organic. The rationality of Hegel's organic state helps us to consider a crucial question in regard to his philosophy, around which much criticism has gelled. What for Hegel is the relationship between individuals and society as a whole? There are critics who see Hegel as collectivist, by which is meant the subsumption of the individual into the state. Others have seen Hegel as more liberal, espousing personal freedoms, and celebrating Bastille Day. However, the principle of rationality enables a different and subtle view of Hegel's state. In being a product of reason, society is subject to rational criticism and revision, through the deliberations of the Estates and the law-enacting sovereign. If any practice is unreasonable, then it is the duty of society to correct it; indeed, this cleansing action enables *Geist* to achieve self-fulfilment. Hegel sees individuals and society in a symbiotic relationship, as befits an organic being. Individual members of society in becoming ever more deeply involved in it, attaining its universal aspects, become more the human beings that they should be. Society cannot exist without these

individuals. It was not the case of "there is no society, only individuals", or vice versa, but "there are individuals *because* there is society", and vice versa. Fundamentally, however, judgement on Hegel's system relies upon one's valuing of human reason. If it is seen to be a tool of divining society's way forward, and can be guaranteed as defectless, then Hegel's system is benign. If, however, it is seen to be flawed, then Hegel's system must be based on a misconception.

Hegel's notion of the constitution of society is likewise organicist. The institutions and relationships within states cannot be simply dreamt up by reason alone, like Bentham's 1831 Polish Constitution. Constitutions have to reflect what already exists within society, its mores and dynamics. Hegel introduced his discussion of constitution in the following words:

> The political constitution is, first, the organisation of the state and the process of its organic life *with reference to itself*...Secondly, the state in its individuality is an *exclusive* unit which accordingly has relations with *others*...
> (Hegel 1991b:304) [Hegel's Italics]

Constitutions are two-fold, an organisation of its interior and exterior relations, the former between its constituent parts such as family, civil society and corporations, police, justice etc., and the latter as a whole society in dealings with others. As such, constitutions treat societies as whole objects, and thus are part of the universal. But this universal must be rooted in the particular of society; there was a balance to be struck. Hegel explains this:

> ...the state, as the spirit of the nation, is both the law which *permeates all relations within it* and also the customs and consciousness of the individuals who belong to it, the constitution of a nation will...depend on the nature and development of its self-consciousness...Each nation accordingly has the constitution appropriate and proper to it.

(Hegel 1991b:312) [Hegel's Italics]

Hence the failure, cited by Hegel, of the Napoleonic Spanish Constitution: although it was reasonable and superior to what the Spanish had before, it was doomed to failure because

> ...they [i.e. the Spanish] rejected it as something alien...The constitution of a nation must embody the nation's feelings for its...condition. (Hegel 1991b:313)

Hegel's natural inclination for a constitution was monarchical. Philosophy of Right outlines in essence a constitutional monarchy. However, the King was not just presidential nor a figure-head. Hegel saw the role of the monarch as fundamental in society. Hegel explained it:

> The power of the sovereign itself contains the three moments of the totality [i.e. of the state] within itself, namely the *universality* of the constitution and the laws, consultation as the reference of the *particular* with the universal, and the moment of ultimate *decision* as the self-determination...from which its actuality originates.
> (Hegel 1991b:313) [Hegel's Italics]

For Hegel, the King represents all citizens, embodying true citizenship and living a universal life from within his particularity. He represents the state as a totality and by his place in the legislature he gives laws a human face. Laws are laws in Hegel's society because an individual, the monarch, assents to them. They are personal, and also personable. This leads Hegel to see an hereditary monarchy as the best constitution, for, as Pelczynski explains,

> ...philosophy...demands that the individuality of the state should find concrete embodiment in an individual brought to his position in an immediate, i.e. natural way, through birth. (Pelczynski 1964:127)

Weil suggests that it is

> ...the essential function of the Hegelian prince...to represent the almost biological continuity of the state. (Weil 1998:63)

Moreover, Hegel maintained that hereditary monarchy gave the state a real stability, in that

> The rights of birth and inheritance constitute the basis of *legitimacy*...If the mode of succession is clearly defined - i.e. if the throne is inherited - the formation of factions is prevented... (Hegel 1991b:323)

Hegel explains this complicated arrangement, characteristically, in a compressed few words. Within the power of the sovereign, he suggests,

> ...i.e. that moment of individuality...contains within itself the three moments of the state as a totality. In other words, the "I" is simultaneously the most individual and the most universal [element]. (Hegel 1991b:313)

Hegel's monarch is also desirable in a constitution because he is an embodiment of reason. According to Hegel, the structure of the state follows on logically from "the philosophical concept of the free, rational will alone" (Brod 1992:151). The monarch embodies this reason and its subjective freedom which is the goal of all citizens. The monarch is the symbol of reason because in putting his "I will" to laws, he shows that society is free from all irrational sources of authority, such as nature or religion (as in the case of ancient oracles), or by blind appeals to tradition for tradition's sake. There is nothing in the constitution that is foreign to reason and, therefore there is nothing in the state that cannot be understood and assimilated by its citizens. Brod further suggests that

> The monarch's "I will" ends this quest [i.e. for authority outside human reason] and makes possible the self-grounding of political obligation. (Brod 1992:153)

Despite the pivotal role Hegel gives to the monarch in Philosophy of Right, he is not

the only figure who represents and embodies the idea of freedom or the essence of the state. Citizens of Hegel's society also have their legislative government in which rational freedom is expressed and developed. Hegel distinguishes between government and the state. He termed the government the "strictly political state" (Westphal 1993:25) and reserves the term "state" for the whole of society. The "strictly political state", apart from the monarch, had two principle arms. These were

> a. the power to determine and establish the universal - the legislative power;
> b. the subsumption of *particular* spheres and individual cases under the universal - *the executive power*
> (Hegel 1991b:308) [Hegel's Italics]

These roughly correlate to a form of Parliament in (a), and a civil service in (b). These are independent of civil society and corporations, although their personnel will be members of both.

Hegel's first division of government he termed "the Estates", bodies which in some way represent the State's citizens. The Estates are essential to society's organisation; with the monarch they are partners in government. The monarch is that "moment of ultimate decision", while the Estates have

> ...the *executive power* as the advisory moment which has concrete knowledge and oversight of the whole...and knowledge of the needs of the power of the state in particular. (Hegel 1991b:339) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel suggests that the Estates have one primary function: they are to "bring the universal interest into existence", and

> ...to bring into existence...the public consciousness as the *empirical universality* of the views of the *many*.
> (Hegel 1991b:339) [Hegel's Italics]

The Estates have a duty of over-seeing society to ensure that it is well-governed and legislated for, and also to ensure that society realises the universal. In other words, it is to interpret the universal on behalf of society and to interpret the universal to society. As such, the Estates are not made up of delegations or elected representatives, for as a mass the citizens of the state do not actually know "what is in their best interest", and nor do they even "know their own will" (Hegel 1991b:340). The Estates act as a "mediating organ" between the government and the people. They ensure that the monarch "does not appear as an isolated extreme and…as an arbitrary power of dominion", and they fulfil the same function for the corporations and individuals of society. They act as a kind of bridge between the two (Hegel 1991b:340).

According to Hegel, there are two "sections" of the Estates. The first is that of "landed property", although it would be to misunderstand Hegel's system to simply call this an aristocratic Estate. Hegel sees that the landed have their place in the first section of the Estates because they possess a "natural ethical life", based upon the family and dependent on the soil. It is stable, and has in it a sense of tradition and permanence. "Thus", writes Hegel,

> in its particular aspect, this estate shares in that independent volition and natural determination which is also contained in the moment of sovereignty. (Hegel 1991b:345)

Just as the monarch is free from faction because he was *born* into the job, so are the members of the first Estate. Because of their inherited positions they are immune from particularity:

> This estate is better equipped for its political

> role...insomuch as its resources are independent of the resources of the state and of the uncertainty of trade...It is likewise independent of...executive power and the masses, and is even protected *against its own arbitrariness* by the fact that [its] members...do not have the same right as other citizens...to dispose freely of their entire property...Thus, their resources become *inalienable inherited property*...
> (Hegel 1991b:345) [Hegel's Italics]

Not everyone who is a member of the "landed" and "naturally ethical" class will fulfil a role in the first section of his Estate. Although "the right of this section of the substantial estate is based upon the natural principle of the family", not everyone is "called to this vocation" (Hegel 1991b:346). Presumably there is some form of selection, but Hegel does not explain.

The second section of Hegel's Estates "encompasses the *changing* element in *civil* society" (Hegel 1991b:346). These are not only merchants and professionals, but also landed persons, although of recent origin. This would be a house made up of deputies. These would be drawn from those who

> ...are thoroughly familiar with...each particular major branch of society (e.g. commerce, manufacturing industries, etc.) (Hegel 1991b:350)

Despite Hegel's natural suspicion of democracy (see below), he believes that an elected chamber is the only way to institute this Estate. There are two reasons for this. There is "the external reason", which is simply that society has too many members for each to play an equal part in the deliberations of their Estate. There is also the "essential reason", which is because of "the nature of its [i.e. civil society's] determination and activity" (Hegel 1991b:346). As civil society is not a mass of individuals but is "articulated into its associations", the election of deputies gives these a political side to their existence and this - given Hegel's previous discussions

- enables their members to sense the universal, and ultimately facilitates the development of *Geist*. Deputies should be

> ...credited by those who elect them with a better understanding of such matters [of universal interest] than they themselves possess. (Hegel 1991b:348)

They are the more politically developed members of civil society, who are able to overcome particularity and "not subordinate the universal interest to the particular interest of a community or corporation" (Hegel 1991b:348). They are not representatives (or deputies in the strict sense) because they do not represent the views of the electorate; rather, they are to freely deliberate in their Estate, rising above the concerns of their originating community. How these elections are to be held, Hegel does not specify. In Hegel's system, democracy does not really exist, as even those elected are specifically required *not* to represent the electorate. The system is designed to produce deputies who are there to divine the universal.

Hegel's bicameral Estates are designed with reason in mind. The division into two houses "ensures that the Estates are less likely to come into conflict with the government", presumably by not enacting unreasonable legislation, although Hegel does not articulate this. When functioning properly, the Estates do not have a leading role in government of the state "...for their role...is purely accessory" (Hegel 1991b:351). This is not to say that their role is unimportant. It is vital, for they ensure

> ...that, through their participation in [government]...the moment of *formal* freedom attains its right in relation to those members of civil society who have no share in the government. (Hegel 1991b:351-352) [Hegel's Italics]

Ultimately, the Estates are part of Hegel's scheme of education and inculturation

into the ways of *Geist*.

Separate from the King and Estates is the Civil Service. This is important in Hegel's system. The members of this are "professional seekers after universality", in that they are paid for their labours and have no other employment. Being independent, the civil servant is freed from "...subjective dependence and influence" (Hegel 1991b:333). Hegel describes the task of the civil service as "...upholding...*legality* and the *universal interest of the state*" (Hegel 1991b:329). The Civil Servant is to find satisfaction in the task appointed, which has "...a value in and for itself..." (Hegel 1991b:333). They are the "universal estate", and its members are "...not destined by birth or personal nature to hold a particular office" (Hegel 1991b:332). In this, they are appointed differently than the King or the first Estate. Hegel's civil service is a meritocracy, based upon "...knowledge and proof of ability". This "...guarantees every citizen the possibility of joining the universal estate" (Hegel 1991b:332). Hegel does however, in a contradiction, later suggest that the civil service is drawn from "...the middle class, which embodies the educated intelligence...of the mass of the people" (Hegel 1991b:335). The sovereign has the duty to appoint the civil service. There are several strata within it. At the top are departmental heads, meeting regularly with the King, and below them are those whose work is taken up within their own departments.

Hegel's monarch, Estates and the civil service were not democratic institutions, at least by modern standards. Hegel opposed rule via elections, as this put inappropriate power in the majority's particularism. In considering an elective monarch, Hegel suggests that

> *Elective monarchy* may well seem the most *natural* idea, i.e. the most obvious to superficial thinking; for since it is the concerns and interests of the people that the monarch must look after, it can be argued that the people must also be left to choose whom they wish to entrust their welfare to…This view…bases itself on the will in the sense of *caprice*...[which] is completely opposed to the idea of ethical life. (Hegel 1991b:324) [Hegel's Italics]

The people, in elections, act upon particular needs, and would not contemplate the whole. These "particular needs" for "the people" meant negative freedom: it was freedom *from* things. True freedom, the Idea, to Hegel was a system *for* things, that is, the development of *Geist*-like self-consciousness. "The people" as such constituted a threat to stability:

> *The many* as single individuals…do indeed live *together*, but only as a *crowd*, i.e. a formless mass whose movement and activity can consequently only be elemental, irrational, barbarous, and terrifying.
> (Hegel 1991b:344) [Hegel's Italics]

Eliot noted Hegel's antipathy to "the People" in the Lectures:

> ...it is a dangerous and false prejudice, that the People *alone* have reason and insight...the question as to what constitutes the State is one of advanced science, and not popular decision. (Hegel 1991a) [Hegel's Italics]

However, Hegel's attitude to democracy was complex. It cannot be said, as some critics have, given the election of deputies to the second section of the Estates, that he was anti-democratic.[24] The issue revolves around the articulation of universals within politics. The whole Hegelian political process was dedicated to revealing the universal in society and acting upon it. It was reasonable, and every reasonable

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[24] Weil, for example suggests that Hegel's Estates had "...no direct elections" (Weil 1998:70), which cannot be surmised from Philosophy of Right.

person in society would hold that it was a natural process, and so potential problems of non-representation of groups and individuals in the Estates would not occur.

6.6. Eliot and the Idea, Society and State

How far was Eliot's political thought influenced by Hegel? Is there any notion of "the Idea", i.e. the development of freedom, in Eliot's thinking? And how far did Eliot's sociology mirror the theories contained in Philosophy of Right? First, we must give a brief outline of Eliot's system of politics as contained in his 1939 The Idea of a Christian Society.

Eliot's book was originally a course of lectures delivered at Cambridge in March 1939, and published in September in revised form along with introduction and notes. They were undertaken by Eliot at the invitation of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, and the Boutwood Foundation (Eliot 1982:41). Thus they were of an academic nature, their audience being primarily students and dons. This 1939 commission in some ways mirrored his 1926 Clark Lectures. In the spring of 1939, and even more so at publication, there was the threat to Western Civilisation posed by Communism and Fascism, and The Idea of a Christian Society is set in their shadow. They were founded on strong ideological systems, and, as Eliot had made clear in The Criterion, English society needed a firm system of belief with which to counter them. Human beings, according to Eliot, naturally have "...a craving to believe in *something*" (Eliot 1967pp:282) [Eliot's Italics]. This belief was normally vested in religion, but sometimes political systems can be

"...substitutes for religious beliefs" (Eliot 1967pp:282). This was especially true of Fascism and Communism, as Eliot explored in his The Criterion article "The Literature of Fascism". Here, he examines the "...popular result of ignoring religion" which had marked 1920's English society, and this fall from religious norms led to "...the populace transfer[ing] their religious emotions to political theories" (Eliot 1967pp:283). And it was the *theory*, the ideas, of Fascism and Communism that were the real enemy, not military might - "What matters", wrote Eliot in 1928, "is the spread of the Fascist idea" (Eliot 1967pp:283). Traditional beliefs in God were losing force; and so were beliefs in democracy - many, according to Eliot, had joined in the "...disparagement of democracy" (Eliot 1967pp:283). Democracy had failed, notably, in solving the 1926 General Strike. Democracy had been given up as a "silly idea", and the trouble was: "When the whole world repudiates one silly idea, there is every chance that it take up with another idea just as silly..." (Eliot 1967pp:283).

Given the weakness of religion and democracy in the face of foreign ideologies, Eliot poses the question, does English Christianity have the force to combat the new threats? A healthy society, according to Eliot, is ultimately based upon sound ideology, and as he suggests at the end of the book: "If you will not have God...you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin."

Eliot prefaces his 1939 work by stating that

> My point of departure has been the suspicion that the current terms in which we discuss...political theory may only tend to conceal from us the real issues of contemporary civilisation. (Eliot 1982:41)

These "current terms" Eliot does not define at this point, but as later in the work he

suggests that discussions of the intricacies of Church-State relations and Parliamentary democracy do not interest him, we might posit that Eliot considers these "terms" to be the structure of political life, the State in its Hegelian "political aspect". Eliot, with characteristic modesty which belied the contemporary importance of The Idea of a Christian Society[25], suggests that its pages will "...have little importance by themselves..." (Eliot 1982:41), but will simply high-light the problem which "...must occupy many minds for a long time to come..." (Eliot 1982:41). Eliot states that

> ...what I am concerned with here is...the organisation of values, and a direction to religious thought which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic systems. (Eliot 1982:42)

His study is concerned with the fundamental ideas of what it is to be a Christian Society, rather than the structures by which that society is expressed. In seeking these ideas, Eliot suggests he is pursuing a political philosophy, but in a particular way:

> ...what I mean by a political philosophy is not merely even the conscious formulation of the ideal aims of a people, but the substratum of collective temperament, ways of behaviour, and unconscious values which provides the material for the formulation. (Eliot 1982:50)

By understanding this we might see how Eliot can suggest that his subject is "...a preliminary to the problem of Church and State" (Eliot 1982:45-46). He is interested in ideas, and Eliot's definition of "idea" - an unacknowledged borrowing from Coleridge (and see below) - is worth quoting in full:

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[25] The book was published in October 1939, and reprinted in November and December.

> In using the term "Idea" of a Christian Society I do not mean primarily a concept derived from the study of any societies which we may choose to all Christian; I mean something that can only be found in an understanding of the end to which a Christian Society, to deserve the name, must be directed. I do not limit the application of the term to a perfected Christian Society on earth; and I do not comprehend in it societies merely because some profession of Christian faith...is retained. My concern with contemporary society, accordingly, will not be primarily with specific defects, abuses or injustices but with the question, what - if any - is the "idea" of the society in which we live? to what end is it arranged?
> (Eliot 1982:43) [Eliot's capitalisation]

Eliot's study is therefore ideological; it examines the *theory* of society, but not from a Utopian standpoint - Eliot's concern is with contemporary society. The study is also a teleological one; it examines society in reference to its *end.* Eliot expands on this goal of society in reference to what he sees as its two main groupings of citizens, which will be examined shortly.

One of Eliot's concerns throughout The Idea of a Christian Society is that the Christian faith should be given "...*intellectual* respect..." (Eliot 1982:43; Eliot's Italics). Eliot is keen to highlight its theoretical strengths, in contrast to its emotional side - for the individual believer, Christianity is a "...matter primarily of thought and not feeling" (Eliot 1982:43). In this scenario, it is clear that contemporary English society is not organised around Christian principles to an extent which would make the term "Christian Society" appropriate; it is, in fact, a "...Neutral Society..." (Eliot 1982:44). This assertion leads Eliot into a judgement on all writing on the subject prior to his own:

> ...neither the classical English treatises on Church and State, nor contemporary discussion of the subject, give me the assistance that I need. For the earlier treatises...assume

> the existence of a Christian Society; modern writers sometime [sic] assume that what we have is a pagan society...it is these assumptions that I wish to question. (Eliot 1982:46)

Eliot makes a bold claim for himself: he is the only person who has correctly defined English society as Neutral. His colleagues past and present either over-play the nation's Christianity or else its pagan side. The latter term is used by Eliot to categorise theories of the state which are positively anti-Christian, such as Fascism and Communism. However, England, in limbo, has not yet given birth to another faith. Eliot wishes to raise a positive Christianity from its ruins.

One reason why society has not adopted a "pagan" position is that it still held fast to democracy and liberalism, which had stood it well in the past:

> What the Western world has stood for - and by that I mean the terms to which it has attributed sanctity - is "Liberalism" and "Democracy". (Eliot 1982:48)

Eliot distrusted both concepts. Liberalism for Eliot was paradoxical. It was a stage which society went through when it abandoned one positive set of beliefs and had not yet found another. It "...may be a tendency towards something very different from itself..." (Eliot 1982:49), for it tends to "...relax rather than to fortify" (Eliot 1982:49). Here, one hears echoes of After Strange Gods' society "...worm-eaten with liberalism." What was so dangerous about liberalism, argues Eliot, is that it

> ...can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the...brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos. (Eliot 1982:49)

and

> Out of Liberalism itself come philosophies which deny it. (Eliot 1982:51)

For Eliot, liberalism with its concomitant of freedom, was something different than it was for Hegel, who stressed its positive side, that of freedom *for* something, that is, the self-realisation of individuals within the State and through this, *Geist* itself. Democracy, Eliot asserts, is also an ambiguous term, and he asks whether it "...means anything, in meaning too many things..." (Eliot 1982:48). A case can be made, suggests Eliot, that Nazi Germany is democratic: Hitler was elected by democratic process in 1933. What the West enjoys, Eliot suggests, is not democracy but "...financial oligarchy" (Eliot 1982:48), run by "...congeries of banks" (Eliot 1982:56). In 1939, "We are living...in a kind of doldrums between opposing winds of doctrine..." (Eliot 1982:52).

It was possible that English society would move towards the paganism of Communism and Fascism. Eliot sees this as possible because of the industrialisation of society:

> The more highly industrialised the country, the more easily a materialistic philosophy will flourish in it...the tendency of unlimited industrialisation is to create bodies of men and women...detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob. (Eliot 1982:53)

Not only is Eliot echoing Hegel's fear of the atomisation of society, but there might be seen an echo too of Leavis and Thompson's 1933 Culture and Environment. This book argued for the creation within universities of a "...discriminating and highly-trained intellectual elite whose task it was to preserve the cultural continuity of English life" in the face of mass-media (Leavis 1958:24). Although Leavis and Thompson's cure for modernity were different from Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society, we can see that Eliot's concerns were not unique. Eliot's charged words in

the above citation need careful consideration. He equates, in a simple manner, materialism with the means of production. This may well be correct, but he gives no reasons for this assertion, and we might posit a counter-example of the Soviet Union, which in 1939 was still predominantly an agrarian society. Eliot also equates the breaking of bonds between people and the soil with materialism, as though the shifting population from countryside to town and the move to regulated hours at the machine by themselves created these "bodies of men and women". Eliot in this passage seems to rely upon general observation and anecdote rather than research. This move from life's traditional norms entails a potential problem for Christianity, Eliot argues. In the dislocation of families amidst industrialisation,

> Anything like Christian traditions transmitted from generation to generation within the family must disappear, and the small body of Christians will consist entirely of adult recruits. (Eliot 1982:54)

In the face of liberalism, democracy and industrialisation, society must either

> ...proceed into a gradual decline of which we can see no end, or...reform itself into a positive shape...
> (Eliot 1982:55)

This shape must be Christianity - "...the only possibility left is that of a positive Christianity" (Eliot 1982:55). This would be a difficult task for England, as "...the Anglo-Saxons display a capacity for *diluting* their religion..." (Eliot 1982:55; Eliot's Italics). Eliot, in The Idea of a Christian Society, does not claim to provide a scheme of action "...by which such a Christian society could be brought into being." He confines himself to an "...outline of what I consider to be the essential features of this society..." (Eliot 1982:55).

In his theory of Christian Society, Eliot asks

> ...to be allowed to use the following working distinctions: the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians..." (Eliot 1982:56)

The first category, the Christian State, Eliot conceives as simply "...the Christian Society under the aspect of legislation, public administration, legal tradition..." (Eliot 1982:56). It is the Political State, in Hegel's terms, concerned with government and administration. Eliot, however, does not spend much time in discussing this; it does not fit his examination of the *ideas* of society, which lie behind the Christian State. Governments merely implement the ideas that are inherent in the society which they regulate. Eliot does not consider that it is necessary for State officials to be Christian, for "The Christian and the unbeliever do not...behave very differently in the exercise of office..." (Eliot 1982:56), for it is the society which they govern which determines their actions, and "...not their own piety..." (Eliot 1982:56).

Eliot divides politicians into three sorts. First, there are those who take a ready-made philosophy as their guide, e.g. Marxism. Second are those who have made their own philosophy "...combining invention with eclecticism..." (Eliot 1982:57), and lastly there are those who govern "...without appearing to have any philosophy at all" (Eliot 1982:57). Eliot does not prescribe for politicians any particular philosophy; he "...should not expect [them]...to be philosophers..." (Eliot 1982:57). Nor does he desire to see them form ideas eclectically, nor does he wish them to have no guiding ideas at all. Instead of cleaving to any particular theory of politics, Eliot wishes all leaders of the Christian state (and all members too), to have a thorough-going Christian education, which would equip them, believers or not, with the right basis for action.

As this education in Eliot's theory lies at its heart, it is worth our while examining it closely. Eliot makes it clear that Christian education "...would not be merely to make men and women pious Christians..." (Eliot 1982:57). This would be to limit education to instruction. It was a broader undertaking than this, and its aim would be to "...train people to think in Christian categories..." (Eliot 1982:57), that is, to think around issues using Christian terms of reference. This objectified education, according to Eliot: one need not be a believing Christian to be able to do this. Issues of personal belief did not arise in this education - it would not "...compel belief and would not impose…insincere profession of belief" (Eliot 1982:57). Thus the Statesman's personal beliefs did not matter, as long as he were clear about the "...beliefs to which they would be obliged to conform" (Eliot 1982:570). Overall, Eliot suggests,

> ...a sceptical or indifferent statesman, working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian statesman obliged to conform to a secular frame. (Eliot 1982:57)

Eliot conceives his governing class as, perhaps, a kind of civil service, who were obliged to implement the policies of whatever party was in office. Their own political beliefs are irrelevant to their work. Eliot, in this comparison, sees the Christian tradition as the "ruling party", and the politicians in his scheme as its impartial facilitators whose education enables them to function. Their education enables them to seek what Hegel might have termed the "Universal" in human affairs, and act upon that alone. Eliot is perhaps too sanguine. He does not give much place to the Christian State; he sees it as a cipher through which the *idea* of a Christian Society is implemented.

Eliot's theory of education is not simply that of inculcating Christian values into individuals who will then imbed these in their own lives and in the nation. There was for Eliot a cultural component too in education, and this was part of the wider realm of Christian values for it was Christian culture that marked England (or should do), and these two strands of life, education and culture, were connected. Just as the Christian categories in which people were educated had to be uniform, so had the cultural side of education:

> You cannot expect continuity and coherence in literature and the arts, unless you have a certain uniformity of culture, expressed in education by a settled…agreement as to what everyone should know... (Eliot 1982:67)

As such, a nation's education for Eliot

> ..is much more important than its system of government; only a proper system of education can unify the active and contemplative life…politics and the arts. (Eliot 1982:67)

Only education, and this in Christian categories, can protect against what Eliot saw as the threats to England; "...a state secularised, [and] a community turned into a mob..." (Eliot1982:67).

Eliot's theory of education leads us to consider Eliot's two other groups in the triptych of Christian Society. Everyone undertakes a Christian education. For the majority of people, however, relationship to the "Christian categories" in which they were educated would be largely one of behaviour, and "...unconscious behaviour..." at that (Eliot 1982:58). This group Eliot called "the Christian Community". He saw it as "...the great mass of humanity..." (Eliot 1982:57), akin to Hegel's First Estate, whose

> ...attention is occupied mostly by their direct relationship to

> the soil, or the sea, or the machine, and to a small number of persons, pleasures, and duties... (Eliot 1982:58)

The members of this group have

> ...little capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith...their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour: both in their customary and periodic religious observances, and in a traditional code of behaviour...
> (Eliot 1982:58) [Eliot's Italics]

This "traditional" code of Christian ideals "...should form for them a natural whole..."; one might almost say that it is an organic social and ethical life - a *Sittlichkeit* (this will be examined below).

This social system, according to Eliot, is parish based. Although the parochial system is "...certainly in decay..." (Eliot 1982:58), its reform is not Eliot's business. This "community unit" must not be "...solely religious, and not solely social..." (Eliot 1982:58). It contains the totality of human life, and Eliot suggests that

> ...nor should the individual be a member of two separate, or even overlapping units, one religious and the other social. The unitary community should be religious-social, and it must be one in which all classes...have their centre of interest. (Eliot 1982:58-59)

The religion of the people

> ...must be integrated with its social life, its business and pleasures; and the specifically religious emotions must be a kind of extension and sanctification of the domestic and social emotions. (Eliot 1982:59)

This certainly had parallels within Hegel's thought. In the Lectures, in a passage which Eliot annotated, Hegel suggested that

> Secular existence...is consequently only relative and unauthorised; and receives its validity only in as far as the universal soul that pervades it - its principle - receives absolute validity; which it cannot have unless it is

> recognised as the definite manifestation, the phenomenal existence of the Divine Essence. On this account it is that the State rests on religion.
> (Hegel 1905:53) [Hegel's capitalisation]

For both authors, the citizen's was a social-religious life, a totality - it is a "...unified system of [a] religious-social code of behaviour" (Eliot 1982:62). For Eliot, it is geographically based, literally in a specific area of land parcelled by ancient boundaries, which are entirely religious in origin. Eliot envisages a society split into micro-societies, organically linked to the soil. This has echoes of the 1934 After Strange Gods, in which Eliot praises Virginians for preserving their traditional way of life in the face of industrialisation, rooted in "...fertile soil" (Eliot 1934:25). Industrialisation had caused disruption to English Society and Christian Community, according to Eliot. By the way of life which industrialisation engenders, "...the masses of people have become increasingly alienated from Christianity" (Eliot 1982:59). Eliot does not expand on how this process is achieved; presumably by the erosion of the traditional "community unit" of the parish, which he presents as

> ...the idea of a small and mostly self-contained group attached to the soil and having its interests in a particular place, with a kind of unity...which...has to grow through generations. It is the idea, or ideal, of a community small enough to consist of a nexus of direct personal relationships... (Eliot 1982:59)

Sharing the same ethical-social life as the Christian Community were the members of Eliot's third part of society, the "Community of Christians". These were people who were "...conscious human beings...", from whom one could expect "...a conscious Christian life..." (Eliot 1982:58), in that their thought and behaviour

were governed not by instinct but by conscious reflection on Christian faith. This group acts as a guardian to the Christian ethos of Society. This is necessary because, as the majority will have a Christian faith which is largely based on habit, and given the Anglo-Saxon attitude of diluting religion, there arises the potential of a slip toward what Eliot terms "...expediency...lethargy and superstition" (Eliot 1982:62). The Community of Christians is not a local group nor one with clear membership; Eliot calls its outlines "nebulous". Details are not given as to how members might be chosen; it seems that they simply appear and begin their task. "These", wrote Eliot, "will be the consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual superiority" (Eliot 1982:62-63).

Eliot is mindful that his Community of Christians has a similarity with the "Clerisy" that Coleridge devised, and which in Eliot's day Murry had attempted to revive. Not wishing to pre-empt the discussion in Part 3, it will be sufficient here to say that Eliot sees his own term "Community of Christians" as one which is "...at once wider and more restricted" (Eliot 1982:63). It is more restricted because it does not automatically include such professions as teachers and clergy, as in Coleridge; it is wider because Eliot envisaged that it would include not just Christians, but those who "...may be indifferent or disbelieving" and even a proportion "..of other persons professing other faiths than Christianity" (Eliot 1982:63). Eliot allows this because, given their common education in Christian categories, they would all effectively think the same way. The Community of Christians "...would contain both clergy and laity of superior intellectual and/or

spiritual gifts", and it would "...also include some of those who are ordinarily spoken of…as 'intellectuals'" (Eliot 1982:64-65). The members of this group were not professionally so; they lived their lives as everyone else (in parishes), and went about their employment; their action as members of the Community was that of influencing those around them and keeping society on Christian lines. They might be members of the government, or of the Church, or the teaching profession, or of the "various occupations" (Eliot 1982:64).

The Community of Christians was to be dispersed across society in its efforts to keep it on the right track. In being dispersed, its members would safeguard against a decline in English culture. Instead, the Community of Christians would ensure that the values of a Christian and cultured nation would be inculcated across the provinces. They would also militate against the tendency of industrial society to depress the "...standards of …culture" (Eliot 1982:66), chiefly through "...advertisement and propaganda", especially the popular press, which tended to create a "mob" which was "...susceptible to mass suggestion" (Eliot 1982:53). The mob thus created is then used as a market for mass-produced goods, further reinforcing its existence. This is seen not only in manufacturing, but also in cultural output:

> Accordingly the more serious authors have a limited, and even provincial audience, and the popular write for an…uncritical mob. (Eliot 1982:66)

Overall, in doing their work, the Community of Christians are to act to "...form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation" (Eliot 1982:68).

But to what end was society formed? Eliot is circumspect on this, and, in

keeping with his sketch of society "...from which are omitted many details that will be considered essential..." (Eliot 1982:68-69), what he does suggest is brief. A Christian society is one

> ...in which the natural end of man - virtue and well-being in community - is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end - beatitude - for those who have eyes to see it.
> (Eliot 1982:62)

Eliot's suggestions will shortly be compared to Hegel's, and suffice it to say here that Eliot *seems* to envisage a twin-track teleology of society. Eliot definitely sees society's *raison d'être* as embodying in some way the wherewithal for its citizens to lead the good life (in an Aristotelian fashion), and to provide for others the wherewithal for "beatitude". A number of points can be made. Eliot does not suggest who might be the receivers of beatitude, but one suspects that they would be coterminous with his Community of Christians, who are the more "spiritual" of the nation. Eliot does not expand on exactly what "beatitude" is; he may have in mind those to whom Christ referred on the Sermon on the Mount. How far Eliot's "ends" of society compare with Hegel's notion of society embodying the Idea of Freedom will be discussed later on.

Despite Eliot's denigration of both Liberalism and Democracy, he insists that

> ...the form of political organisation of a Christian State does not come within the scope of this discussion.
> (Eliot 1982:77)

The reason is simple: to do so would be to "...confound the permanent with the transitory…" (Eliot 1982:77). This is an implied judgement; politics belongs to the realm of the ephemeral (a hint of Bradley here?), whilst the *ideas* of society are permanent. The political incarnation of Christian society is almost an irrelevance:

> Those who consider that a discussion of the nature of a Christian society should conclude by supporting a particular...political organisation, should ask themselves whether they really believe our form of government to be more important than our Christianity... (Eliot 1982:77-78)

However, even given this, there are forms of government inimicable to Christianity, that is, those essentially Pagan. In The Idea of a Christian Society it is Fascism and Communism which are the bogies, and they have that role for one reason only: their underlying ideologies, their Ideas, are atheist. It is "...dogma that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society" (Eliot 1982:79):

> As political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, and ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organisation which will not...ignore some essential aspect of reality. (Eliot 1982:82)

This is another reason why Eliot dismisses beliefs in democracy and liberalism: these were mere political forms, and what really mattered was the substance filling them. The choice in 1939 was clear: God, Hitler, or Stalin. It was only this unlikely trinity which offered any core of ideas on which to build society. In Eliot's mind, the Christianity of England was superficial, but it was yet to become something else. There was still time to awake, and for society to envelop itself once more in Christianity, but the time was short; Fascism's and Communism's forces were soon to arrive. The Munich Crisis had shown that Democracy had no substance, and had been "humiliated...we had no ideas with which we could either meet or oppose the ideas opposed to us" (Eliot 1982:82). What was needed, pleaded Eliot, was that core of ideas which would reinvigorate society, and this had to be Christianity.

Eliot's indifference to forms of government might help to explain why he is

not interested in relations between Church and State. This view might seem surprising, especially given that the relationship between the two had been much debated in Eliot's day, following the debacle over the 1928 revisions to the Book of Common Prayer, when it seemed that Parliament had the final say in matters even pertaining to the Church's liturgy. Eliot side-steps all this debate; by 1939 it had become an irrelevance.

Eliot is aware that the Church-State relationship was likely to be troubled, but as there was no blue-print for Christian government, the problem was likely to be unique to every society in which there was a Church and State. As these could not be legislated for, Eliot simply suggests that the problem

> ...will take a different form according to the traditions of that society - Roman, Orthodox, or Lutheran. (Eliot 1982:69)

It was implied that each society had to provide its own form of government; this however was of secondary importance compared to its underlying Christian ethos.

Although Eliot does not spend much time on reflecting what form of administration fits Christian Society the better, he is more interested in what type of Church it should be that enters into the Church-State relationship. Overall, it should be the Church

> ...as can claim to represent the traditional form of Christian belief and worship of the great mass of the people of a particular country. (Eliot 1982:70)

In England, this would be the Church of England. Eliot suggests that this "official" status of the Anglican Church should give it a special status in society - "...such a society can only be realised when the great majority of sheep belong to one fold"

(Eliot 1982:71). This may have been the case in 1939; Eliot does not expand on the problem which would be met if no one Church could claim to be the "traditional" Church. This was a moot point in America, Eliot admitted - here, the "...variety of...religious denominations represented appears to render the problem insoluble" (Eliot 1982:69-70). A Christian Society, therefore, was healthiest when there was a unitary religious system.

Eliot's Church in his Christian Society was to have several characteristics. It was to have hierarchical organisation "...in direct and official relation to the State..." (Eliot 1982:71). It was to have an organisation "...such as the parochial system, in direct contact with the smallest units of the community..." (Eliot 1982:71), and it must have "...officers...[in] relation to the Community of Christians" (Eliot 1982:71). In matters of morals and doctrine it would have the final say. Sometimes it might find itself "...in conflict with the State...in matters of national policy." Whether the Church in a Christian Society should be Established is a moot point for Eliot. Although he takes the Established role of the Church of England as given,

> I do not assume that the relation of Church and State in England...is a model for all other communities.
> (Eliot 1982:72)

Once again, Eliot does not wish to write a "blue-print". As the Anglican Church is already Established, Eliot does not see any reason for disestablishment. This would be a disaster, an "abdication" of its duties - it would be a "...visible...withdrawal of the Church from the affairs of the nation..." (Eliot 1982:72). It would tend to lower the Christian faith to the level of "...private and independent sects" (Eliot 1982:74);

having an Established Church keeps Christianity on the nation's agenda. Moreover, Eliot's Established Church, which he also calls the "National Church", is not simply a home-grown affair. It is part of the Church Universal, and relates to all other Christian Churches. A national Church is that branch of the Universal Church incarnated in a particular country, and this may "...vary according to the racial temperaments and cultural traditions of each nation" (Eliot 1982:75). He notes that the growth in the Ecumenical Movement had affirmed "...the Universal Church on earth" (Eliot 1982:75-76). It was in keeping the Universal in mind that the National Churches would be prevented from becoming "...no more than the voice of that people's prejudice, passion or interest" (Eliot 1982:76). Its theology "...has no frontiers" (Eliot 1982:76).

These things having been observed, we are now in a position to better ascertain how Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society compares to Hegel's political philosophy. From the outset, we must make clear one major difference between Eliot's attempts at describing society and Hegel's: the latter's is more detailed and longer. Hegel spent many years defining his political theory, whereas Eliot's social criticism, in our period of investigation is largely confined to The Idea of a Christian Society, which in page length is barely one-seventh the length of Philosophy of Right alone. We cannot therefore expect an exact correlation between the two authors, by simple reason of page space, but we might be able to detect influences and parallels, if there are any.

Another remark we might make in preface to our next comparison is a simple but potentially striking one. It has been recognised that Hegel admired much of the

British system of government, with its constitutional monarch, and its bicameral parliament. Roughly contemporary with Hegel was the move in British administration to found a professional civil service. Hegel's account of the formal structures of state in Philosophy of Right has a resonance with the British constitutional system, at least in nineteenth century form. Hegel, on one level, appears to be describing nineteenth century Britain. By Eliot's time, although the role of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Government would have developed considerably, the political system in Britain was still close to the Hegelian model, at least in outline. As Eliot appears to take much of the existing system for granted in The Idea of a Christian Society, and refuses to talk about the reform of political structures, we might even suggest that he takes the Hegelian system, as revealed in Britain, as read. However, this is just conjecture, although it is worth bearing it in mind alongside Eliot's other putative Hegelian parallels.

The first comparison between Hegel and Eliot on the matter of state and society apparently reveals a divergence. Hegel's use of the term State could also be interchangeable with the word society. He also had many different nuances of definition, as we saw above. Eliot has little complexity. He confines the word state solely to the formal institutions of government and administration, although it is not used in contrast to the term society:

> I conceive then of the Christian State as of the Christian Society under the aspect of legislation, public administration, legal tradition, and form. (Eliot 1939:56)

The state, then is *part* of society, its officers drawn from its members and its functions aimed at aiding society's goal. It is true that Hegel had the idea of the

formal structures of the state, the state "in its political aspect", but it would be true to say that Eliot's vision of the state is not as broad as Hegel's. Moreover, Eliot never actually takes the pains to define "society" properly; he seems to assume it is something like "all the inhabitants of a certain nation considered together".

However, both authors are clear that society is not artificial, but organic. Like Hegel, Eliot is Aristotelian in his conception of the biological basis for society. This can be seen in his anxieties about industrialisation. This tended to divorce men and women from "the life of significant soil", and create something which was ultimately destructive of society as a whole:

> Britain has been highly industrialised longer than any other country. And the tendency of unlimited industrialisation is to create bodies of men and women - of all classes - detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob. (Eliot 1939:53)

Industrialisation tended to break society's natural bonds, which Eliot saw as predominantly family orientated and based upon a close union with the land. This is seen in his description of the parish system, by which he sets so much store. The parish he sees as "...an example of community unit [sic]" (Eliot 1939:58), which is

> ...a small and mostly self-contained group attached to the soil and having its interests centred in a particular place...a community small enough to consist of a nexus of direct personal relationships. (Eliot 1939:59)[26]

This network of communities, however, according to Eliot had been threatened for

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[26] In English society, the word "parish" has two meanings. Both refer to an area of land, but one is ecclesiastical and the other political. The former relates to a geographical area the inhabitants of which have certain rights in the local church. The latter is a unit of civil administration, usually confined to rural areas. Eliot always deals with the ecclesiastical parish.

some time, because of industrialisation's artificial communities. "The parish", he asserted, "is certainly in decay" (Eliot 1939:58). That it *decays* tells us that Eliot sees it as organic. Following from this, Eliot does not see society's reform to be by artificial means. In examining solutions to the problems of urbanisation, he sees the flaws inherent in the "Ruskinian" view of a "return to a simpler mode of life", and suggests rather that

> ...if such a way of life ever comes to pass, it will be - as may well happen in the long run - from natural causes, and not from the moral will of men. (Eliot 1939:60)

Society has to grow naturally; solutions to its problems cannot be constructed. One is reminded of Hegel's comments on Spain's Napoleonic Constitution.

Although Hegel believed the state a biological entity, he also viewed it as a "hieroglyph of reason". As there was no divorce between human thought and the natural world in Hegel, so the organic state was a creation and embodiment of reason. As such the conception of Hegel's state was something radically new on the political scene. Eliot has a similar way of defining his task in The Idea of a Christian Society. Although at first sight his book might well seem to be a call to traditional values in political life - with the parochial system, for example - Eliot's rationale in his 1939 work is something new, at least in Eliot's eyes. Despite the reliance upon such writers in the English tradition as Hooker and Bramhall in his 1928 For Lancelot Andrewes, in The Idea of a Christian Society he eschews all authority this tradition might have given him. He rejects the nineteenth century Arts and Crafts return to the simple land-based life of communities as apparently exemplified in the

medieval period.[27] And, moreover, he categorically states that in coming to his task

> ...neither the classical English treatises on Church and State, nor contemporary discussions on the subject, give me the assistance that I need. (Eliot 1939:46)

This is noteworthy, given the great importance Eliot puts on "the Tradition" in many other writings. Moreover, it is a complete reversal of his views in For Lancelot Andrewes where Bramhall's writings "...are very much to the point today" (Eliot 1970f:35), and that even

> There could hardly be a greater difference than that between the situation in the first half of the seventeenth century and the situation to-day. Yet the differences are such that as to make the work of Bramhall the more pertinent to our problems. (Eliot 1970f:48)

This does mark a massive shift in Eliot's thinking (even if it is temporary); alas there is little space for us to explore this. It is perhaps not far of the mark to suggest that the Abdication Crisis of 1936 shattered Eliot's belief in the role of the monarchy in British society, and as this was a pivotal institution in his scheme of things (he was, after all - if hyperbolically over-stated - "...a royalist in politics" [Eliot 1970:7]), its seeming destruction may well have soured his views of the other institutions in the English tradition, notably Parliament and the Established Church. The only potential reference to the Abdication issue in The Idea of a Christian Society is oblique; in discussing Disestablishment, he suggests that it would lead the Church into an "abdication" (Eliot 1939:72) by the Church of its duties towards society. The word

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[27] Led by Ruskin and Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement may be characterised by a desire for society to return to organically-based life, built upon the products of the soil and artisan labour, in the face of the perceived evils of Industrialisation.

"abdication" was surely used deliberately: if the Church, he might be suggesting, were to distance itself from society, then it would lead to a catastrophe as great as Edward VIII in his abdication, potentially wrecking constitutional balance. It is interesting that Eliot examines substantially neither Parliament nor the Established Church in The Idea of a Christian Society and in his next contribution to ecclesiology, the 1943 Reunion by Destruction, he criticises the scheme for reunion of the Churches in India, which was supported by the English Bishops. Given this apparent bankruptcy of political thought at the time, Eliot, therefore, like Hegel, has to look for other sources of authority with which to plan his vision of society.

He does this by appeal to the Christian faith, but in no straightforward manner. He does not wish for a "religious revival". Perhaps having the 1933 Anglo-Catholic Revival in mind, he suggests these movements

> ...seem[s] to imply a possible separation of religious feeling from religious thinking which I do not accept.
> (Eliot 1939:42)

He had also noted that

> Towards the end of 1938 we experienced a wave of revivalism which should teach us that folly is not the prerogative of any one political party or any one religious communion...It is not enthusiasm, but dogma, that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society.
> (Eliot 1939:78-79)

Reason was central to Eliot's Christian society; society, as for Hegel, had to be rational. For Hegel, it was based on the first principle of "the Idea", rational freedom; for Eliot, the "idea" of Christianity had to provide a *reasoned* account of itself in order to stand up to Communism and Fascism, which had strong ideologies. Eliot distrusted anything which appeared to dissociate intellect from sensibility,

preferring to appeal to reason. He was primarily concerned, he explained at the beginning of his 1939 work,

> ...not [with] spiritual institutions in their separated aspect, but the organisation of values, and a direction of religious thought... (Eliot 1939:42)

It was the rational side of the revealed faith that Eliot wanted to amplify in order to analyse society. Christian Society, logically, should be run on Christian lines, and this meant *theological* lines. That Eliot called his 1939 work The *Idea* of a Christian Society shows how this lay at the heart of his endeavour. This "idea", wrote Eliot,

> is one which we can accept or reject; but if we are to accept it, we must treat Christianity with a great deal more *intellectual* respect than is now our wont; we must see it... for the individual as a matter primarily of thought and not of feeling. (Eliot 1939:43) [Eliot's Italics]

This would appear similar to Hegel's system, where by reason individuals become aware of society's universals and thereby rise to be true members of the state. Although Eliot would never perhaps call the Christian State a "hieroglyph", he may well have seen it as part of Divine providence. Certainly he would have seen the "idea" of Christian society as bringing its members into unity, as opposing continental ideologies had done. However, it is probable that Eliot did not see reason as an Hegelian dynamic *force*; Eliot's concept of reason was perhaps more akin to the Scholastic vision of it as a *faculty* of human nature.

As we saw above, Hegel's vision of society was structured. Eliot is less concerned with providing structures for The Idea of a Christian Society. He appears to take for granted the existing dynamics of British society, which in essence could be seen as Hegelian anyway, as we saw above. Rather, Eliot focuses upon the

groupings of people in society, which cut across formal institutions such as the family. As we have seen before, Eliot's two groups are the Christian Community, and Community of Christians. As such, there is no immediate clear-cut correspondence between Eliot's two groups and any strata within Hegel's system. However, there are notable similarities between some characteristics of Eliot's groups and those Hegel gives to bodies within society.

Hegel saw society composed of three "estates". These were not divisions on socio-economic terms, but rather in "accordance with the concept" of society (Hegel 1991b:237), that is, freedom. Eliot's two classes are also not divided on simple terms of birth, wealth, or education. People are of one group or another according to how each approximates to the *idea* of Christianity. In the Christian Community the Christian faith would be "ingrained", a thing of habit, requiring "only a largely unconscious behaviour" (Eliot 1939:58). It would be by far the biggest group within society; it was

> ...the great mass of humanity, whose attention is occupied mostly by their direct relation to the soil, or the sea, or the machine, and to a small number of persons, pleasures and duties...their capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith is small, [and] their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour... (Eliot 1939:58) [Eliot's Italics]

This group of people would appear to correspond to the members of what Hegel put into his first two estates - the "immediate estate" (those linked intimately to the soil), and the "estate of trade and industry". Moreover, Hegel does admit (in a somewhat paradoxical fashion, given that his ultimate aim for every citizen is to achieve consciousness of the universal state), that the "political disposition" of people is one based on "...a volition which has become habitual" (Hegel

1991b:288). Hegel in his view differentiates between rural and urban groups, whereas Eliot sees no such differentiation. This would appear the only difference. Both Eliot's Christian Community and Hegel's first and second estates have their immediate lives as their chief concern and the immediate products of their industry. Hegel's third estate, the "universal estate", corresponds to the "Community of Christians". Hegel saw his universal estate as having "...the *universal interests* of society as its business" (Hegel 1991b:237) [Hegel's Italics]. Eliot likewise saw his community in a similar manner. It would:

> ...include, besides many of the laity engaged in various occupations, many…of the clergy...The Community of Christians...would contain both clergy and laity of superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts. (Eliot 1939:67)

Members of Hegel's universal estate were appointed on their "...knowledge and proof of ability" (Hegel 1991b:332). Eliot's Community were to

> ...influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the common mind…of the nation. (Eliot 1939:68)

This would appear similar to Hegel's task for his estate, articulating and implementing the state's universal interests. For Eliot, the "universal interest" of the Christian State was faith's implementation in society, through forming the collective mind and conscience of the people. Another similarity between Hegel's universal estate and Eliot's Community of Christians is education. Hegel's estate is drawn from the "...educated intelligence…of the...people", whilst Eliot's is bonded by their "...identity of beliefs and aspirations, [and] their...common system of education" (Eliot 1939:68). It would appear that both authors see their top estates as an educated elite, acting as society's mind, reminding it of its ultimate ends. There

are several ways, however, in which Eliot and Hegel diverge on their thought here, although in the grand scheme of things we might see these differences as minor. Hegel employs the members of his "universal estate" in the civil service. Eliot's Community of Christians is not officially employed, but acts in society through doing its quotidian tasks. It is "...not an organisation, but a body of indefinite outline..." (Eliot 1939:58) which, not being employed as Community members, have liberty to act as such. The members of Hegel's civil service were employed by virtue of being members of the universal estate, and this employment, according to Hegel, guarantees them impartiality. However, we must keep in mind that Hegel's civil service is much broader in shape than contemporary counterparts. It could also be interpreted as including social services, teachers and ministers of religion.

Another Hegelian concept which resonates within Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society is that of the Corporations. This is not immediately obvious, as Hegel's scheme owes much to medieval guilds. Eliot has no such interest in any English equivalent, such as the Trades' Unions. However, Hegel's Corporations as we saw above are not merely bodies to regulate trade. That is their superficial function; their main task is to educate citizens to extricate each from particularity to the universality which is Hegel's State. By being a member of a Corporation, each person

> ...belongs to a whole which is itself a member of society in general, and that he has an interest in, and endeavours to promote, the less selfish end of this whole.
> (Hegel 1991b:271)

Thus society is on one level an *association of associations*, and the individual's participation in the whole is mediated by way of the manageable unit of the

corporation. Eliot's comparable scheme, not at first similar to Hegel's corporations, is his system of parishes.

Just as Hegel's corporations were not simply trades organisations, so are Eliot's parishes not simply units of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. They are not, says Eliot, "...solely religious, and not solely social" (Eliot 1939:58). Rather, they are "unitary communities" which mix the religious and social life of those who live in its bounds, and it includes *everyone* who lives in a particular area - the parish must "...be one in which all classes...have their centre of interest" (Eliot 1939:58). Each parish is a microcosm of wider society, just like Hegel's corporation, although the membership of the Hegelian scheme is more restricted. Eliot's parishes are organic and unitary and like Hegel's corporations, membership is restricted to one parish only - "...nor should the individual be a member of two separate...units" (Eliot 1939:58). The entire social and religious life of each parishioner would be contained within a particular geographical area - Eliot takes as his norm

> ...the idea of a small and mostly self-contained group attached to the soil and having its interest centred in a particular place. (Eliot 1939:59)

Education, too, would fall within its parameters, just as it did to a large extent in Hegel's corporations - one learnt to be a true citizen by involving oneself in the corporation's affairs. Eliot admits the parish system would be difficult to achieve, but nonetheless he places the whole of The Idea of a Christian Society on its foundation. As such, Eliot's society appears like a vast tapestry of communities just like that envisaged in “East Coker”, which was surely impossible in the Britain of 1939 and probably always was. Likewise, Hegel's corporations appear to be largely

a pipe-dream, and just as difficult to achieve. Both authors, it might be argued, had visions of society based on small community units which were adaptations of what, at the time of their writing, was a disappearing social system. We might even suggest that, in this, they were what we might call *radical reactionaries.*

The purpose of Hegel's corporations, despite beginning in the particularity of civil society, was to form their members into true citizens of the State, by way of universality. As such, the State is society's culmination. Eliot has, on first inspection, no such teleology involving "the State". Although Hegel would differentiate between the "political state" and the state proper which was society consisting of reasoning individuals, Eliot only speaks of the state in its former sense:

> I conceive then of the Christian State as of the Christian Society under the aspect of legislation, [and] public administration... (Eliot 1939:56)

Moreover, Christian society does not *develop* into the Christian state, as it would in the Hegelian scheme, but rather society *chooses* which form of state (in governmental terms) is appropriate to itself:

> What I mean by the Christian State is not any particular political form, but whatever state is suitable to a Christian Society, whatever State a particular Christian Society develops for itself. (Eliot 1939:46)

Although it could be argued, from the words used, that Eliot *does* see the Christian State as society as a whole - the former is the latter *under the aspect* of different categories- it would be true to say that Eliot's idea of the state is only administrative. This becomes clearer as Eliot describes the relationship between Church and State. In accepting this dichotomy, Eliot affirms his intention in using the term "state" in

the limited sense; in Hegelian usage there could be no divide; the church would be part of the state, and in some ways coterminous.

However, despite these different emphases, it would be true to say that Eliot's scheme of society does have a similarity with Hegel's. Hegel's state, which was society fully realised in reason, was the goal towards which each member of civil society aspired. It marked the final progress from particularity into the arena of *Geist*, which would be realised in human affairs when the Idea came to fruition. Eliot too has a teleology, although it is not expressed in metaphysical terms. If we examine the purpose of society, we might see that Eliot envisages some form of realisation of a cosmic "Idea" in Christian society. We can see this emerge in Eliot's concept of education:

> A Christian education would primarily train people to be able to think in Christian categories, though it would not compel belief and would not impose the necessity for insincere profession of belief. (Eliot 1939:57)

Each citizen would have the groundwork of Christian reasoning, and would be able to examine for himself the merits of society's aims, at least in theory. (Eliot shortly after this rather deflates his aim for education by suggesting that for the "Christian Community" the "...capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith is small" (Eliot 1939:58). There is a definite tension within The Idea of a Christian Society between Eliot's theoretical aims and his reflections on how society actually operates, and this can lead to confusion.) If we bear this in mind as Eliot describes the "ends" of society, then we might see Eliot's scheme as having some relationship to Hegel's. Eliot states that

> ...the Christian can be satisfied with nothing less than a

> Christian organisation of society...It would be a society in which the natural end of man - virtue and well-being in community - is acknowledge for all, and the supernatural end - beatitude - for those who have eyes to see it.
> (Eliot 1939:62)

Given that "the Christian" produced by Eliot's education system would be able to see such "supernatural ends" (this, surely, is one of the most fundamental "Christian categories"), then the expectation for each member of society would be "beatitude". Eliot had a mixed message for society: although on the one hand he expected each member to be educated to achieve beatitude, as a pragmatist he saw that such a system would fail. "Beatitude" Eliot does not define satisfactorily; it is not clear whether he means a state of grace upon earth or the Heavenly Kingdom. Presumably, it is something realised upon earth, as it is to do with the *Christian organisation of society*. Although Eliot does not call this state of beatitude the "universal" state, it is obviously the ultimate stage of development in the peoples' social lives, and would - again, presumably - be about the ultimate things, that is, of divine providence. As such, it is really a state of mind in the individual (taking "mind" as equal to "soul") for both our authors. To attain the universal in Hegel is a matter of reason; in Eliot, it is a matter of "seeing it", based on an individual's faith. To be a member of Hegel's State, and to be a fully realised member of Eliot's, demanded a certain level of consciousness or sensibility.

It is perhaps in examining Eliot's "ends" of society that we might see that he comes closest to Hegel's vision of the State as embodying the Idea of Freedom. For Hegel, as we have seen, the goal of the State was to incarnate the realisation that "...all men as such are free, and that man is by nature free" (Pinkard 2000:492).

Although Hegel suggests that this is the goal for *all* members of the State, he does acknowledge that this attainment of the Universal is not possible for everyone. Some Dissenting groups will never attain this level of development, such as Anabaptists and Quakers, who preferred to create their own distinctive cultures over and against the mainstream. They will, nevertheless, enjoy the benefits of Civil Society. In essence, Hegel envisages a twin-track citizenry. Might Eliot's twin goals of society, "beatitude" and "well being in the community", be similar to Hegel's view? Eliot's Community of Christians attain the level of beatitude. Those citizens in Hegel's State who exercise their *Geist*-like powers of reason attain Freedom within the State. Eliot's Christian Community, whose attainment of the Idea of Christianity is habitual, will possibly fail to achieve beatitude but nevertheless enjoy well-being. Hegel's citizens who do not achieve freedom in the State remain within the parameters of Civil Society, nonetheless enjoying protection and an amount of recognition. Eliot, alas, is too brief in his description for us to be more definite about this possible correlation. Moreover, it is not possible to say whether Eliot's "beatitude" is akin to Hegel's idea of Freedom. Its overtones of the heavenly realms might suggest that it is not a state which Eliot's citizens achieve in society, which Hegel's Freedom definitely was. A likeness between the two systems is that both authors envisage that some citizens will achieve the higher planes; others will not. The correlation between Hegel and Eliot on development towards universal ends works on the level of the *individual* - for Eliot, each citizen has the potential of rising to "beatitude", and each citizen in Hegel's system may achieve membership of the State. However, Hegel envisages

such a development for entire societies also, whereas Eliot does not. Eliot's vision of Christian Society is static: it does not develop in the way that Hegel charts the evolution of human society in such works as the Lectures. For Hegel, *Geist* in its search for self-realisation within human affairs is constantly moving history forward. Eliot's "Idea" of the Christian Society is on a different metaphysical plane. It does not "move" societies in an objective way like Hegel's *Geist*. There is a sense that society changes itself to approximate to the Idea of Christianity, but this is not done in a grand fashion across human epochs and is instigated by human society by itself, and not so much in conjunction with what Hegel's *Geist* almost appears to be, an objective force. This is a crucial difference between our two authors and cannot be stressed too vigorously.

Whether Eliot had such a positive view as Hegel on human freedom is a moot point, also. However, it surely would not be far of the mark that Eliot would agree with the central Hegelian tenet that every human being as such is free, and should enjoy freedom. However, this is not articulated in his social criticism; perhaps there was no need for it as with Hegel, who attempted an historical critique of the State wherein the central tenet of freedom underwent an evolution. Eliot deals only with his present situation, although he is anxious to preserve freedom from Fascism and Communism. For Eliot, however, as in Hegel, freedom was not simply a question of preserving a lifestyle in which one could choose what one wished to do or be; it had to be a *positive* freedom and have a goal other than itself, that is, beatitude and well-being. Whether this echoes anything of Hegel's concept of Freedom is open to interpretation, but I suggest there is a similarity.

As with the goal of society, there is no immediate link between Hegel's and Eliot's ideas of society's constitution. Hegel outlines his notion at length, but Eliot is vague about his. Instead of suggesting any particular form of government Christian society should take, Eliot leaves it to society to choose. Eliot intended Christian society to be adaptable to suit the needs of different nations, and he suggests the problems of how to form a Christian society

> ...will take a different form according to the traditions of that society - Roman, Orthodox, or Lutheran. It will take still another form in...the United States of America and the Dominions... (Eliot 1939:69-70)

However, despite Eliot's wishes that The Idea of a Christian Society be seen as applicable for different nations, and this mirrors Hegel's political philosophy, throughout its pages Eliot does take England (not, notably, Britain as a whole) as his arena. This shows a divergence from Hegel, and should be added to that other major divergence between the two, that of the *telos* of society. Moreover, as we saw above Hegel's political theory is also his theory of *Geist*'s development towards self-realisation, and this provides Hegel with a philosophy of history. Eliot's social theory, on the other hand, has no such theory of evolution. Society must attain a certain level of Christian development, and there it may stop. There is no "march of history" or further goals to accomplish. Eliot's vision of society has another difference from Hegel in that it is anglo-centric. He talks of the necessity of the Church of England, for example, and parishes, which can only be applicable to England. Herein is another tension, or perhaps flaw, in the work: Eliot is not entirely clear as to what is his target audience - is it English society, or all others which might call themselves Christian? On one level he wants to avoid limiting the

work by not making it too specific, yet on the other hand it appears to lack clarity when applied to England. If we do take it as an English document (which I believe we should), it would appear glaringly lacking in any discussion on the role played by the monarchy. This is especially so given Eliot's royalism, which saw him in his "Commentary" in The Criterion of October 1933 suggest that "...a devotion to the Throne" (note the capitalisation) "...may act as a check and balance upon devotion to the party…or the State" (Eliot 1967rrr:629-630). The king, therefore, could act as a deterrent to totalitarianism, and this suggestion makes the monarchy's exclusion in The Idea of a Christian Society - written in the face of European totalitarianism - doubly puzzling. In some ways, it might be said that the scheme of things developed by Eliot in The Idea of a Christian Society would be the natural arena for a monarch. The gradations of society - the masses in the Christian Community, the few in the Community of Christians - would be topped out nicely with the figure of the King. It would make Eliot's system personal and the King could be a representational figure, showing the people at large an example of the life of beatitude and Christian living. In the absence of such a figure, the individual in Eliot's society is a vague presence, and society's strata nebulous. Perhaps the Abdication Crisis and the role Parliament played in it disillusioned Eliot as to the English constitutional scheme. When crisis loomed, it was a democratically elected body which seemed to have the power over the nation's traditions, and this Eliot - given his fear of democracy - could not accept. Moreover, it was not simply a question of Parliament usurping a new role for itself: Edward VIII's brief reign had brought the whole notion of monarchy into question. In abdication, Edward as King

was turning his back on the whole concept of monarchy. George VI's position was ambiguous: the true heir being still alive, it might be reasoned that George was not truly King but a Parliamentary-sponsored usurper. Although Eliot remained silent on the issue in public (Eliot's "Commentaries" in The Criterion throughout the period of Edward VIII's reign and the Abdication Crisis contain no reference to either), and the preceding argument can only be a suggested reconstruction of his thought, it might go some way in explaining why there is no monarchy in The Idea of a Christian Society. Eliot seems to shift from an extreme royalist position to complete indifference within a few years. We may only speculate on what the constitution of The Idea of a Christian Society might have been if there were no Abdication; one would think that the role of the monarch would be very prominent, if not quite couched in Hegelian terms.

Hegel's monarch was assisted in his task by bicameral Estates, to which he devotes several sections of Philosophy of Right. Eliot, however, had no wish to discuss the role of Parliament in The Idea of a Christian Society. This makes for a less substantial work but there were perhaps two reasons for the omission. First, there was Eliot's long-standing distrust of democracy which we shall examine in Part Three. Suffice it to say here that democracy for Eliot brought several woes on society. It lead to a political vacuum that paved the way for Totalitarianism. It also had a debilitating affect on literature. In his 1933 The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism he wrote

> ...when the poet finds himself in an age…when power is in the hands of a class so *democratized* [my Italics]...the necessity of criticism becomes greater. (Eliot 1933a:21)

In The Idea of a Christian Society Eliot's scepticism about democracy was continued. English democracy - and its Parliaments - was an empty concept. Although in 1939 Eliot saw "democracy" being at "the height of its popularity", he also saw that

> ...when a term has become so universally sanctified as "democracy" now is, I begin to wonder whether it means anything… (Eliot 1939:48)

Moreover,

> ...defenders of the totalitarian system can make out a plausible case for maintaining that what we have is not democracy, but financial oligarchy. (Eliot 1939:48)

Eliot's cynicism about democracy was not just some uninformed elitist complaint: he had a fear that, the main element of Western society being weak, totalitarian regimes might easily overcome any resistance. In these views, Eliot and Hegel had a certain congruence. Although the latter's Estates were elected, Hegel had no time for the rule of the masses. As we saw above, in elections people tended to act on their own particular interests and not the universal concerns of society at large. The population form a "crowd", the behaviour of which was "...irrational, barbarous, and terrifying" (Hegel 1991b:344).

Second, and as a corollary to this, there was the role played by Parliament in the crisis of 1936. (If this is an accurate depiction of Eliot's position, then it points to his rather a-historical politics, as Parliament had played a crucial role in the 1688 Settlement). Eliot had been disillusioned with politics throughout the 1930's. Leading from the 1926 General Strike, for which the politicians had no substantial answer, according to Eliot (see Part Three), Parliamentarians of the succeeding

decade were decidedly under-par. Writing in his "Commentary" in the October 1930 The Criterion, Eliot bemoaned the fact that

> ...the distinction of M.P. is not what it once was; and we may hear at any moment from the more inflammable daily press that Parliamentary Government is an "anachronism". (Eliot 1967ccc:1-2)

Parliament seemed to be a declining institution. In 1930 the summer session of the House "..ended in public depression and decay", and Eliot commented that "...we look forward to the autumn resumption with still less hopefulness" (Eliot 1967ccc:1). No party offered any real ideas; foreign policy was of

> ...presenting premature "self-government" [to the Colonies], such self-government to be, of course, invariably on an English model; and it involves the same old fallacies. (Eliot 1967ccc:2)

The English political system was not just based on a fallacy, but it was also a system in decay:

> The rot in Parliament is only a symptom of the rot without...mediocrity of mind and spirit is to be found conspicuous. (Eliot 1967ccc:2)

Eliot in 1939 had no reason to change his views on English government; the decade had been one of undistinguished Parliamentary affairs and political uncertainty. It seemed to him a world of decaying "fallacy". Things had not improved by 1939, and this may well have been the background to Eliot's omission of Parliament in his 1939 work: that the crisis of that day had come about at all was further proof of an inadequate system. In summary, Eliot gives us one of his most barbed comments about the state of English politics and society:

> The Roman Empire left behind it at least a few ruined temples, aqueducts, and walls; one is sometimes inclined to

> wonder whether the British will leave...anything better than the traces of innumerable golf courses... (Eliot 1967ccc:4)

6.7. A Problem of Unity: toleration, alienation, Judaism

For Hegel and Eliot society is unified. The state, for Hegel, **was** a structure made up of families and corporations, administered by a civil service **and** legislated for by the Estates and the monarch. The whole of society was orientated to achieve the universal by dint of reason, in order that the Idea and thus *Geist* could achieve self-fulfilment. For Hegel, every individual knew that the fulfilment of the self was in harmony with others in community. There was, commented Hegel, an "...absolute identity of duty and right" within the state - "...what is right for one person ought also to be right for another" and "...what is one person's duty ought also to be another person's duty" (Hegel 1991b:284). Everything in the state "...depends on the unity of the universal and the particular" (Hegel 1991b:285). For Eliot, unity within society was made by the "idea" of Christianity. This pulled people together, unifying their social and educational life.

There were major problems for both authors, however, in their quest for unity. Perhaps, we might say, it was the bug-bear of all Absolute Idealists' conceptions of society, or certainly those seeking cohesion in society around a core of ideas: there was no real place for those who chose *not* to live by these ideas. In essence, this was perhaps another version of the One-Many problem that could dog Idealism. At the outset, I would suggest that neither Hegel nor Eliot adequately address the issue of the non-compliant individual in their schemes. Hegel sees such

people as a kind of logical non-starter, for they would have to fly in the face of reason in order to take this position. Eliot's treatment of the non-compliant likewise has an unconvincing ring. For Eliot, Christianity was so obviously true that he found it difficult to see the possibility that anyone would not share its revelations and hence the social scheme in The Idea of a Christian Society. Both authors' quests for unity tended to make them blind to the possibility of plurality.

Despite Hegel's suggestion that his system of society was strongly unified at every level, and was like this because of reason, he nevertheless had ambiguity over the issue of unity. At certain points Hegel displays a fear of what he termed "atomicity", that is, the inclination for society to decay into a mass of individuals. As Wood comments,

> From Hegel's point of view, a...serious threat to freedom in modern society is…the tendency in modern life for individuals to be only abstract persons and subjects…
> (Wood 1991:xvi)

This led to people insisting on personal rights and freedoms, at the expense of the universal. This ultimately led to alienation, which lay at the root of all social ills. This entropy not only affected individuals in society, but also afflicted states. In The German Constitution, for example, Hegel identified the chief weakness of the German Federation as being its decay into what Pelczynski termed "...independent political units" (Pelczynski 1964:14). This led Hegel to state pessimistically that "Germany is no longer a state", which meant for Hegel that it was mired in particularity (Hegel in Pelczynski 1964:14). In Germany's case, Hegel's proposed solution was a Machiavelli figure who would unite the nation; Bismarck, perhaps, would fulfil Hegel's prescription. Hegel did not intend his essay The German

Constitution to be a plan of action but he hoped that it would have "...no other effect...save that of promoting the understanding of what is..." (Pelczynski 1964:17). Like Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society, as a piece of political theory is was "not a blueprint" (Eliot 1939:71). From the person in the street, to the state in the union, there were problems of particularity. Unity was a concern at every level. The true path for society for Hegel was that of integration, the many into one, as expressed in this excerpt from The Philosophy of Right:

> ...the individual finds the existence of the people as a ready-made, stable world, into which he must fit himself. He has to appropriate this substantial existence to himself in order that he may be something himself. (Hegel 1991b:237)

The world of the people joined together was, in Hegel's term, "stable". This is a good example of the general Absolute Idealist axiom that reality was somehow the unity of all particulars. As we saw in Part One, Hegel's Idealism was founded on the one proposition, that everything that existed "...is a form of one mind, the "Absolute Mind"". But as we saw, this Mind (*Geist*) was engaged in self-fulfilment. Hence everything that aided this fulfilment was positive, and that which did not had to be overcome. Hence Hegel's stress on Universality within Philosophy of Right - in seeking the universal interests of the state, individuals aided *Geist*'s development. The opposite was also true: particularity vitiated *Geist*. For Hegel, those in society who did not act universally were not just undermining the State's unity: they were committing metaphysical sacrilege. A state not bonded by universals was a weak state, as in pre-Unification Germany, and such states could not embody the Idea. Not only was *Geist* sunk in German particularity, but also (and as a consequence) the nation could not defend itself adequately. Hegel's metaphysics naturally flowed into

his politics.

Eliot's thought followed the same kind of path, although not as obviously. Inheriting Hegel's notion of unity, Eliot saw that society had to mirror the unity in the realm of reason and reality. In his doctoral thesis, Knowledge and Experience, he took pains to outline this imperative of unity and in examining a little its basic precepts we might see The Idea of a Christian Society as a kind of political articulation of his 1916 thesis. "The idea", he wrote in 1916,

> ...is the total content which we mean by reality in any particular presentation...nor is the idea a logical entity, since it always, in the end, comes to occupy a particular place in a real world. (Eliot 1964:40)

Eliot, calling his 1939 book The *Idea* of a Christian Society, was perhaps echoing his earlier proposition. The 1939 idea was the "total content" of Christian society; there was nothing outside of nor at variance with it. The idea of Christian society was, in his 1916 words, "...the whole reality meant...the whole meaning is ultimately the whole of reality" (Eliot 1964:42). Moreover, it could not simply remain an intellectual concept: its meaning could not "...simply be a meaning - for a meaning always means something more than a meaning" (Eliot 1964:43). However, Eliot - following here Bradley's refinement of Idealism rather than the more positive Hegel - suggests that this united, whole world of idea and reality could only be experienced as "fragments" (Eliot 1964:74). It was the task of philosophers to "...yoke these divers..." (Eliot 1964:85) fragments together in order to enjoy a vision of the whole, the Absolute. This kind of thinking, I believe, lies at the heart of Eliot's concern with a united society in The Idea of a Christian Society. For England to be strong, in order that it might survive the threat of the ideas of Fascism and

Communism (and it is notable that Eliot sees them primarily as *ideas* and doctrines rather than military forces), the underlying Christian faith (or idea) of the nation had to be healthy. The citizens had to unite around Christianity. They had to be educated in its categories. They had to live in community units which reflected its organisation into parishes. They had to live by its precepts in society or if they were to be member of the Community of Christians they had to be theologically competent. The whole of society was founded on the idea of Christianity; its idea was the reality intended and meant and also as it existed.

But what of those who did not share the founding principles of the State? These are acknowledged by our authors, but in such a way to make them only a vague possibility. Hegel saw his system as so in accord with human reason that nobody, it seemed, could be other than convinced by it. Eliot's Christian faith was so reasonable and right that he could not believe that anyone would be against it. Those who declared themselves not inside Hegel's society were usually given short shrift. There is what we might call an "imperative of integration" in Hegel's political writings. The individual, as we saw above, as he developed entered into "...a ready-made...world, into which he *must* fit himself" (Hegel 1991b:343) [my Italics]. To be outside of its orbit was to inhabit a nebulous world of particularity with unruly passions which could at any moment threaten society:

> *The many* as single individuals...do indeed live *together*, but only as a *crowd*, i.e. a formless mass whose activity can consequently only be elemental, irrational, barbarous, and terrifying. (Hegel 1991b:344) [Hegel's Italics]

Although Hegel does not suggest what should happen to such "atomic" individuals, in his system they cannot enjoy the full benefits of citizenship but lurk somewhere

around the edges of the State, ready at any time, so it seems, to wreak havoc. In Hegel's structure, these individuals might be able to be members of a family group, but certainly not a corporation and even more definitely not the state. Despite these instances of Hegel's stress on the communal aspects of the state, we must not lose sight that he was also a defender of individual liberty, hence his enthusiasm for the "bright dawn" of the French Revolution. This freedom was however positive, in that citizens were free *for* something, self-realisation and lives in accordance with reason and *Geist*. It was because of this power of reason that Hegel saw the existence of such individuals - despite his apparent fear of them - as somehow *illogical*, like finding a wood ant living a hermetic life.

Eliot was more candid in discussing "outsiders" in his system. Eliot wishes to include at least some members of these groups in his scheme, but is reticent in naming any group explicitly. However, Dissenting groups are present in The Idea of a Christian Society but their presence is veiled, albeit thinly. There are no Jews named as such, for example, but Eliot does inveigh against the "...sin of usury" (Eliot 1939:61) at one point, which *might* be an oblique reference to the Jewish financial community[28]. Eliot's objection to the deistic religion as expounded by Hauer in Germany's New Religion might also be considered a critique of certain English Dissenters, such as Unitarians, especially as he terms Hauer "the end product of German Liberal Protestantism, a nationalistic Unitarian." This was typical of Eliot's view of the "decay" of Catholicism to Protestantism and then to

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[28] If this is correct - and probably Eliot did not write *usury* lightly - then it is another possible anti-Semitic point in his work, and one which has eluded such critics as Julius.

Totalitarianism, and is a severe charge, one might read, against Unitarians (Eliot 1939:72) The way Eliot defined Christianity tended to exclude groups which, by their Christian (or semi-Christian) profession, might naturally form the core of Eliot's society.[29] Although, like Hegel, Eliot assumes a unitary organisation of society around the idea of Christianity, at several points he makes reference to those who would rather choose another idea by which to live. This discussion centres around membership of the Community of Christians. These, as we have already seen, were those of especial intellectual and spiritual capabilities. They were naturally all Christian, as the name suggests, and demonstrated "...a conscious Christian life on its highest social level" (Eliot 1939:58). However, Eliot does realise that not *everyone* who would naturally fit into this community by reason of their intellectual gifts would be a Christian, but if they were of appropriate ability, Eliot envisaged that they would be integrated into it. Its

> ...personnel will inevitably be mixed: one may even hope that the mixture may be a benefit to its intellectual vitality. The mixture will include persons of exceptional ability who may be indifferent or disbelieving; there will be room for a proportion of other persons professing other faiths than Christianity. (Eliot 1939:63)

Eliot does, therefore, include non-Christians in his Community of Christians. Their role, however, is limited. They have certain (and unspecified) "limitations" imposed

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[29] At one point Eliot *did* group together Jews and nonconformist sects. It is notable that Hegel prompted this. In his annotated Lectures, Eliot wrote the comment "Characteristically Jewish idea also Puritan sects" by the text: "With this [i.e. following a religious regime] is conjoined happiness…and prosperity as its reward...here...the understanding has become prosaic...men are regarded as individuals." (page 205.)

upon them, and they would be never more than a certain "proportion", whose only stated duty was to bring a certain intellectual difference to the otherwise homogeneous group to be a benefit to its "intellectual vitality". Eliot's inclusion is, when one considers it in a certain light, grudging, but at least he sees its possibility. These non-Christian members of the Community of Christians do appear, however, to be a group whose non-Christian beliefs appear as a kind of handicap - Eliot describes the non-Christian politician as he who is not "*able* to believe the Christian faith" [my Italics]. At the centre of Eliot's system there is an unshakeable belief in the necessity for unity, and those who cannot hold the Christian faith appear at best as tolerated outsiders. Eliot's attitude to toleration was ambivalent. It seemed to denote a liberal system, with no real core of belief. He tellingly suggested that

> When the Christian is treated as an enemy of the State, his course is very much harder, but it is simpler. I am concerned with the dangers to the tolerated minority; and in the modern world, it may turn out that the most intolerable thing for Christians is to be tolerated. (Eliot 1939:54)

Although the above text is about toleration of a Christian minority, and not those he considers in The Idea of a Christian Society, it does tend to show that Eliot views toleration as a product of the "modern world", which, as he wrote in After Strange Gods, "corrupts" (Eliot 1934a:11).

Although Eliot addresses the problem of non-Christian members of the Community of Christians, he does not appear to be concerned with non-Christian members of the larger Christian Community. Whether he saw such non-Christians as having few members in the mass of English people is an important question but from The Idea of a Christian Society it cannot be answered. That Eliot does not

address the question might show a certain limitation of his vision, or it might simply be the case that he did not see it as a problem. Judged from our own age's (generally) multi-cultural standpoint, however, it does seem an oversight, but this might be anachronistic. At worst, Eliot is guilty of seeing the worth only of an elite of "non Christians" of England; at best, he is unaware of such a potential problem which, given the small number of "ethnic minorities" in England in 1939 compared with today, *might* be excusable.

In short, both Hegel and Eliot saw unity as strength and plurality as weakness. This doctrine in their political sciences arose from their philosophical concerns about the nature of reality. For Hegel, the necessity for universality was paramount. His vision for society was as a united whole. His world was, I suggest, *ontologically singular* - the forming substance of the world, *Geist*, was in Hegel's definition the most singular of entities. Eliot's unity was that of Christian belief in communities. These were identical *centres of consciousness*, to use the terminology of Knowledge and Experience, and any divergence from them would bring the whole system into disarray. This we see clearly in Eliot's comment on society in "the United States of America and the Dominions", where

> ...the variety of races and religious communions represented appears to render the problem [of the organisation of society] insoluble. (Eliot 1939:69-70)

6.8. The role of religion

Both our authors treat their subject matter in profoundly religious ways. As

Williams suggests, this religious view was simply the application of Hegel's metaphysics to politics, of *Geist* being involved in the evolution of the world:

> Hegel maintained that the state has a religious foundation….ethical life is grounded in religion; this is one reason why the various ethical powers and the substantial element of the state may be venerated as sacred…This enduring union is its religious dimension, and its binding and enduring unity. (Williams 1997:328)

Hegel himself suggested in the Lectures that, as "...the State rests on religion" (a statement which Eliot annotated in his own copy) it also "...embodies...the nature of the state as the divine will" (Hegel 1991a:53). Moreover, "...the state is the divine will as present spirit", which will evolve and develop along with *Geist* (Hegel 1991b:292). Hegel's state, however, is not as openly Christian as Eliot's. Despite Hegel's belief that the development of world history came to blossom in the rise of the Germanic and Protestant nations, it is *Geist* that occupies centre stage in all of Hegel's work and not the Christian faith as it does in The Idea of a Christian Society. Hegel's religion might be seen as a Christianity of sorts, with a Trinitarian scheme behind it as we saw above[30], but he describes that faith more abstractly than Eliot. Hegel translates the central tenets of Christianity into metaphysical terms. This can be misleading, and has prompted some into calling Hegel a deist or pantheist. It is a moot point, it seems, in Hegel studies. Certainly Hegel's employers saw him as orthodox, being "outraged" at Keyserlingk's accusation of pantheism in 1826 and holding by its professor (Pinkard 2000:528). One can trace in such

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[30] Dickey quotes Lowith in From Hegel to Nietzsche in stating that Hegel was "the last Christian philosopher" (Dickey 1983:302).

historical works as the Lectures a Christian theological framework of a kind. One of Hegel's main statements about religion is that its content is "absolute truth", and as such religion requires that

> ...everything else should be seen in relation to this and should receive confirmation, justification, and the assurance of certainty from this source. It is within this relationship that the state...receive[s] [its] highest endorsement...Religion therefore also contains that point which...affords a consciousness of immutability and of the highest freedom and satisfaction. (Dickey 1983:302)

This can be seen clearly in Hegel's Lectures in comments on the qualities of Christianity, which Eliot himself annotated:

> It was then through the Christian Religion that the Absolute Idea of God...attained consciousness. Here Man, too, finds himself comprehended in his true nature, given in the specific conception of "the Son." Man, finite when regarded *for himself*, is yet at the same time the Image of God...He is the object of his own existence - has in himself an infinite value, and eternal destiny.
> (Hegel 1905:346) [Hegel's Italics]

Moreover, religion was another manifestation of Reason, sharing in the quality of *Geist*. Again, in another segment from the Lectures which Eliot underscored:

> The process displayed in History is only the manifestation of Religion as Human Reason... (Hegel 1905:348)

As a foundation for the state, it was imperative that its members should hold religious beliefs in order to share in the state's founding principle and, moreover, develop into persons participating in the life of *Geist*. Indeed, the state "...ought even to require all its citizens to belong to [a religious] community" (Hegel

1991a:295)[31], although Hegel was willing to countenance a multiplicity of religious communities, whereas Eliot appears not to. Hegel, nonetheless, preferred Protestant or *Germanic* Christianity to others because it was closer to the Idea of freedom. That is, it enabled people to see themselves as part of a greater community in which all were recognised as free agents. Other religious practices could have a debilitating effect on the shape of society as a whole. He notes that

> Of Quakers and Anabaptists, etc., it may be said that they are active members only of civil society and that, as private persons, they have purely private relations with other people...Towards such sects, the state practises *toleration*...for since they do not recognise their duties towards it, they cannot claim the right to belong to it. (Hegel 1991b:295) [Hegel's Italics]

As we saw above, Hegel had a similar attitude to the Jews. The main problem with these particular groups was that their religion tended to form them into separate sub-groups within society, sealed off from others, with their own particular *Sittlichkeit*: their members could never rise above their group's particularity. Although these "sects" were tolerated, they were not true citizens in the Hegelian system. Moreover, sunk in particularity as was civil society, there was always the possibility of the members of such groups to form the crowd, or mob. In his treatment of the "sects" in Philosophy of Right, Hegel may well be writing out of

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[31] There is disparity, however, between Hegel's early and later writings. In Folk Religion and Christianity, Hegel argued against the adoption of any religion by the State: "...a state, as a civil state, should have no faith at all; nor should its legislators and rulers, in their capacity as such" (Hegel in Avineri 1972:29-30). Hegel's position, argues Avineri, was derived from his reasoning that Christianity, in being adopted as a State religion, changed from being a freely-chosen faith to one forced upon people. Hegel's thinking here presupposes that there is dichotomy between State and Church, which is less pronounced in Philosophy of Right.

the maelstrom of German Reformation history, in which groups like Anabaptists played a significant role and one not always conducive to stability. As we saw above, Hegel was also equivocal towards the Jews, in that they could not *completely* be members of the state because their religious principles tended to create their own unique *Sittlichkeit*.

Both Eliot and Hegel were convinced of the religious foundation of society. But what form should religious practice take? Hegel was of the opinion that religion was rational. There was nothing of what we might pejoratively term "the mystical" in Hegel's account. He asserted that, in the face of such religious expressions as those found in ancient Egypt and India, where mere animals were considered to be gods,

> ...we need a [religion] to rescue us from it...and to champion the rights of reason and self-consciousness. (Hegel 1991b:292)

Religion was reason; it "was to do with the absolute", and therefore was accessible to human reason. The highest forms of religious expression, indeed, tended to expand the powers of reason:

> Religion...affords a consciousness of immutability and of the highest freedom and satisfaction...Religion is the relation to the absolute *in the form of feeling...thought, and faith.* (Hegel 1991b:292-3) [Hegel's Italics]

For Hegel, "feeling" was not mere emotion, but something more akin to Eliot's "sensibility", which produced amongst other things art, and here the two authors exhibit a certain overlap in their terminology. For Eliot the unity of thought and feeling was paramount not only in poetry, but also in faith. The root of Eliot's idea might in fact have come from Hegel himself. In his annotations of Sibree, Eliot

made a double vertical line by the side of the following comment Hegel made on the development of Christianity:

> The process displayed in History is only the manifestation of Religion as Human Reason...thus the discord between the inner life of the heart and the actual world is removed. (Hegel 1991a:348)

In The Idea of a Christian Society, Eliot was at pains to make a case for an intellectually respectable Christian faith. It was reasonable, but was more - it was also in accord with feelings. Similarly, Eliot at two points in his 1939 work emphasised the importance of thought and feeling in matters religious. In the Preface, he states that

> I trust that the reader will understand from the beginning that this book does not make a plea for a "religious revival"...the term seems to me to imply a possible separation of religious feeling from religious thinking which I do not accept... (Eliot 1939:42)

Eliot is also keen to make an intellectual case for Christianity. "The Idea of a Christian Society [note Eliot's capitalisation] is one which we can accept or reject...", he wrote,

> ...but if we are to accept it, we must treat Christianity with a great deal more *intellectual* respect than is our wont; we must treat it as being for the individual a matter primarily of thought and not of feeling. (Eliot 1939:43) [Eliot's Italics]

For both Eliot and Hegel religion was not only a matter of emotional engagement with God. It was an attitude of the whole person which was also intellectual. Being reasonable, religion was also an integral part of both Hegel's state (as the "hieroglyph of reason") and Eliot's Christian Society. Religion could not be compartmentalised and hived off into the nebulous world of individual piety, but it

also demanded "practical results".

One such result which we might expect to see in Eliot's work is a critique of Church-State relations. In the years preceding Eliot's lectures, it had been a matter of debate. The debacle of the 1928 proposed revisions to the Anglican Book of Common Prayer had resulted in many books and pamphlets, amongst them Henson's 1929 Disestablishment, which Eliot cites in the notes to The Idea of a Christian Society (Eliot 1982:90). Eliot's attitude to the matter was complex. He did not welcome the proposed revisions to the Prayer Book at all. However, this was not from the point of view that Parliament should not have the veto over matters of liturgy (and hence also, in Church of England terms, theology), but from the standpoint that the leaders of the Church of England were undermining its authority. In an early comment on the controversy, Eliot, in The Monthly Criterion of May 1927 takes a linguistic line in criticism. On the proposed substitution of "infinite" for "eternal" in the Book of Common Prayer, Eliot suggests that it "...makes the English language vaguer", by "...throwing a mathematical cloak over theology" (Eliot 1967s:190), hinting that the revisers were trying to ape the ascendancy of mathematics in the intellectual world. Later in the year, in The Monthly Criterion of December 1927, in considering the language of the new revisions, he laments that

> It is a pity when...ecclesiastics fail to think clearly, for if they cannot think clearly they cannot write well.
> (Eliot 1967ff:482)

Eliot's ideas on whether Parliament, in rejecting the Prayer Book Measure, was acting correctly, were never made public, at least in print. This reticence appears in The Idea of a Christian Society. Eliot is at pains to state that the "...problem of

Church and State is...not my primary concern" (Eliot 1982:54). His stated reasons are twofold. First, he claims that it is not "...a subject in which the general public takes much interest", and when that interest is aroused by "newspaper exploitation" then the public "...is never well enough informed to have the right to an opinion" (Eliot 1939:45). Second, the subject matter of the book, that of the "Idea" of the society, is according to Eliot "...preliminary to the problem of Church and State" (Eliot 1939:45-46), and therefore discussion of it would be out of place. Were these two reasons valid? The first, that the public was not interested in such discussions, is implausible. Eliot, at least in his prose writings, almost never directed his message to "the public" (the only other example is the 1943 Reunion by Destruction, which was "addressed to the laity") and, it seems, hardly ever took public opinion into account in his writings. Moreover, if this were the case, that public opinion was misinformed, then surely Eliot would have been performing a public duty in attempting to educate. This kind of task he did attempt in the 1943 Reunion by Destruction, which is the closest Eliot came to a direct appeal to the public. The second reason is more plausible, that the book was approaching the question on a different plane than that of a critique of Church-State relations. However, as Eliot writes at length on the curriculum of society's Christian education, and the relationship between Church and State is surely as important to a Christian Society, we are perhaps compelled to say that Eliot is simply shying away from the discussion. The reasons for this are probably manifold. Certainly Eliot's disillusionment with both Parliament and the hierarchy of the Church had a part to play, and also the Abdication Crisis had had a profound impact. And we must not

ignore the more obvious reasons: Eliot was either not interested in the topic or did not have enough of a grasp of it to have anything important to say; or, faced with the threats from overseas, Eliot believed the relations between Church and State was tangential. Whatever the reason, from our contemporary situation, in ignoring the issue in The Idea of a Christian Society, Eliot's work lacks a dimension and this weakens it.

Hegel had a more developed understanding of Church-State relations. Hegel begins his discussion with considering the role of the individual. Churches are formed, he states, "...whenever individuals of the same religious persuasion join together to form a community or a corporation"; as such, this will be "...subject to the policing and supervising of the state" (Hegel 1991b:296). However, the doctrinal side of religion, its teachings and beliefs, are not subject to State control, for this "...has its province in the conscience, and enjoys the right of subjective freedom of self-consciousness...which is not the province of the state" (Hegel 1991b:296-297). Hegel suggests that the locus of authority in matters doctrinal is in the individual. Churches, in the aspect of the matters of faith, are wholly independent of the state (that is, the "state proper", its governmental side). However, its members also being members of civil society and (ultimately) of the state, and by their power of reason their grasp of ultimate things being such, there would (in theory at least) be no conflict between the aims of the Church and the aims of the state. As Weil expresses it, being both products of reason and both having the content of absolute truth, "...no contradiction between the two can possibly arise" (Weil 1998:47). Ultimately, Christians (of the Reformed traditions at least) would

recognise that their personal convictions merged with the doctrine of the Church as a whole, and in so doing, as Brod suggests, they "...abandoned their particularity" (Brod 1992:45). As Hegel expressed it in the Lectures, in the development of Lutheranism,

> ...the subjective feeling and the condition of the individual is regarded as equally necessary with the objective side of truth. (Brod 1992:44)

This for Hegel was the primary principle of the modern world.

It is perhaps this Hegelian dynamic which lies behind Eliot's obscure rationale of Church-State relations. The two systems have some things in common, but as Eliot's treatment of the subject is brief this commonality must remain as tantalising possibilities rather than anything clearer. Like Hegel, Eliot (in his 1939 book at least) seems to base religious authority in individuals rather than structures. Perhaps by 1939 he was already on the path of critical reflection on the role of the hierarchy of the Anglican Church, which had first arisen in Eliot's consideration of the revisions to the Book of Common Prayer (and hence to the English language itself), and which would shortly be proposing one of Eliot's *bete noirs*, the union of the Indian Churches. A case can certainly be made that Eliot considered the leaders of the Established Church (that "oddest of institutions" [Eliot 1932cc:353]) to be a threat to its life, and hence to English society, and that in The Idea of a Christian Society he appeals over their heads to the members of his new kind of clerisy. This would be, given Eliot's trenchant criticism of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion in his 1931 Thoughts after Lambeth, a wise idea. In this essay, he talks of the official Report circulated after the 1928 Lambeth Conference, and notes that

to some readers its "...recommendations and pious hopes will be disappointing."

Moreover, Eliot seems to suggest that the Bishops are incapable of steering the Church:

> ...it ought not to be an occasion to us for mirth that three hundred bishops together assembled should, on pooling their views on most momentous matters, come out with a certain proportion of nonsense. (Eliot 1932cc:354)

Whether this is simply a criticism of the work of Bishops in 1928, or of the office of Bishop within the Anglican Church per se, it is difficult to determine. But certainly by 1943 Eliot was laying at the door of the Bishops and their plans for South India a much greater charge than that of muddled thinking: that of the destruction of the Church itself. Possibly, Eliot had begun to consider that the leaders of the Church in the 1930's, like their counterparts in politics, could simply not be trusted to see the problems that lay ahead or to lead the Church. To read Eliot on the Church of England of the 1920's and 1930's, and that of the age of Lancelot Andrewes and John Bramhall, is to read about two different Churches, although Eliot knew that it was, in theory at least, the same. There is a strong case to be made that the newly converted Eliot has a huge sense of disappointment in the Church he finds, and this is seen in his virtual sidelining of it in its institutional aspects in The Idea of a Christian Society. It is difficult to find any positive reference in Eliot's writings to the contemporary Anglican Church; his approbative comments are always made of the historic Church. Given this, and perhaps following the Hegelian line that there was a vital connection between the interior life of individuals and the exterior life of society, Eliot does seem in The Idea of a Christian Society to eschew any kind of role for a centralised and clerical Church. Eliot's key group, the Community of

Christians, is not clerically based, but is formed from the most able of both clergy and laity. It forms a kind of Hegelian association of individuals who believe the same kinds of things and who act in a similar fashion. Eliot's parish system, too, as we saw above, has overtones of the Hegelian Corporation. Hegel does not articulate any formal structure of the Church, although he had a Lutheran model immediately at hand. Eliot likewise does not adopt any existing Church structure, preferring a description of his two Christian communities. Both writers seem to skirt around the problem of Church-State relationships. And here we must comment on a deeper and more fundamental reason why neither author seems to spend much time on discussing the Church-State divide, although because it is just conjecture this comment must be brief. Perhaps, given their inclination to unity, the thought of such a dichotomy was abhorrent. Division was weakness, and in a formal separation of Church and State division somewhere along the line was almost inevitable. Their solution was, instead of separating the powers in their formal aspects, to root the dynamics of both church *and* state in a single, united group: the people at large. For Hegel, members of the Churches were also members of the state; there were no conflicting calls on their duty - as we saw above in Eliot's annotated note from the Lectures, there is no "...discord between the inner life of the heart and the actual world", by virtue of reason (Hegel 1991a:348). For Eliot, society was primarily composed of what amounted to faith groups - the two communities. Their lives, as Eliot describes, are a unified whole of ethics and belief; there is no room for any potential conflict between duties as citizen or duties as Christian; the two are the same thing.

6.9. Education

In one way, unity in society was achieved by the educative process. Both Hegel and Eliot see education as the way by which individuals take upon themselves the wider concerns of society and are able to cohere within its ideological frameworks. For Hegel, the process of education was a complex process and mirrored in small the development of humanity in general. As Inwood suggests, the gist of Hegel's educational policy was

> ...a progression from a stage of primitive natural unity to a stage of alienation and estrangement, and then to a stage of harmonious reconciliation. (Inwood 1992:70)

The natural world, where as we saw earlier *Geist* is "sunk", has to be overcome not only by societies as a whole but also by individuals. Children were beings entirely in the "natural" state. They are "...free in themselves", and "...their life is merely the immediate existence of this freedom" (Hegel 1991b:212). They were like animals, living for the moment and for themselves only. It was in the family unit that the first stage of education began, that of

> ...raising children out of natural immediacy in which they originally exist to self-sufficiency and freedom of personality. (Hegel 1991b:212)

This would eventually allow them to leave the confines of the family and enter civil society. This process was to be augmented by formal schooling. In this, Hegel desired the first stage in education to be the alienation of the mind -as he expressed in his "Nuremburg Address" - "...from its natural essence and state" (Hegel in Inwood 1992:70), and this was best done by the study of the ancient world and its

languages, their cultural and historical distance being sufficient to "separate" the student from his immediate surroundings. However, the Classical world was sufficiently close (culturally speaking) to enable an eventual reconciliation with the present day, in order to "...find ourselves again" but enriched "...in conformity with the...universal essence of the mind" (Inwood 1992:70). Education, overall, aimed at the elimination of "natural simplicity", that is, "...the individuality in which spirit is immersed", so that the person may "...take on the rationality of which [he] is capable, namely the form of universality..." (Hegel 1991b:225). Hegel summed up the educative process as

> ...in its absolute determination...[a] liberation and work towards a higher liberation; it is the absolute transition to the infinitely subjective substantiality of ethical life, which is no longer immediate and natural, but spiritual and…raised to the shape of universality.
> (Hegel 1991b:225)

Hegel placed responsibility for education on the state. It was "...the prime duty of the state to further education and learning" (Avineri 1972:1). This was done not only in schools and colleges, but also in the Corporations, although these would educate their members by methods other than the study of Classics. However, the basic raising of the individual from his "natural state" remained the same. Civil Society, at one level, was a vast school-room, in which its members imbibed the universal for which they exchanged their particularity. Within Civil Society, observed Hegel,

> ...the interest of the Idea, which is not present in the consciousness of these members of civil society as such, is the *process* whereby their individuality and naturalness are raised…*to formal freedom* and *formal universality of knowledge and volition*...

(Hegel 1991b:224) [Hegel's Italics]

Eliot's thought on education has similarities to Hegel. Eliot consistently showed a keen interest in society's education. He had spent many years as a student himself, and as a teacher in England. As Margolis suggests, "Even after he abandoned the classroom, Eliot remained an educator" (Margolis 1972:3). Eliot would speak on education at conferences such as Malvern in 1941, would write about it in The Criterion and in the 1940's spoke regularly on it. It was a burning issue for Eliot, and The Idea of a Christian Society bases its first principles on the assumption that the citizens have been educated "...in Christian categories". Eliot's aim for education in the Christian society was straightforward:

> In a Christian society education must be religious...in the sense that its aims will be directed by a Christian philosophy of life. (Eliot 1939:64)

In this notion of "...a Christian philosophy of life", was Eliot here making a stand for some kind of Hegelian "universal"? Eliot would have understood Christianity to be of the magnitude of the Hegelian universal. The aim of Eliot's educational system was to produce a citizenry which was united in Christian values, and its aim was the universal in human affairs. Eliot, however, in The Idea of a Christian Society does not expand much on the initial ideas on education that we have cited here. There is none of the Hegelian dynamics of the development of the child from its "natural state", nor discussion on the role of formal schooling nor the parishes in the educational process.

In other writings, however, there is evidence that Eliot took a similar line to Hegel over the role of the Classics in British education. Eliot, a self-proclaimed

"classicist", always stressed the importance of studying the ancient world. This was not for any superficial reason, however, as he asseverated in the 1936 "Modern Education and the Classics". Its central theme - "...it is only within a particular social system that a system of education has any meaning" (Eliot 1936a:161) - is the same as developed three years' later in The Idea of a Christian Society. Eliot argues that Classics should be preserved as a major element in education, and for all ability levels, not simply because of tradition, or "...sentimental Toryism... [or] classical quotations in the House of Commons" (Eliot 1936a:172), but because it underlay the real understanding of "...something permanent: the historical Christian faith" (Eliot 1936:172). Education in the Classics is education in Christian civilisation, according to Eliot, and

> ...it is only upon readers who wish to see a Christian civilisation survive and develop that I am urging the importance of the study of Latin and Greek.
> (Eliot 1936a:174)

The role of Classics, in Eliot's thinking, is to lead students into Christian ways of thought. Although he does not articulate this in the essay, this process may well have had overtones of an Hegelian process of alienation in the student's mind, which eventually would lead to a reconciliation with his own culture and thereby ensure its survival and indeed - in Eliot's word - development.

A stronger parallel between Eliot and Hegel on education comes in another Eliot piece on the importance of Classics, this time from The Criterion of April 1925. A propos of the then Headmaster of Eton's article in the Evening Standard, which Eliot criticises for coming out with the "usual arguments" for studying Classics, Eliot puts forward his own reasons for the place of Classics in education.

Eliot eschews the obvious reasons that Greek is "...the greatest of languages" or that its literature is "...the greatest of literatures", by suggesting (perhaps surprisingly, given his usual objective stance) that "...the standards for such a comparative judgement cannot be found" (Eliot 1967h:341). Rather, he advances a surprising argument, which suggests perhaps that Eliot is working with a more Hegelian type of framework:

> ...the study of Greek is a part of the study of our own mind. Our categories of thought are largely the outcome of Greek thought…One of the advantages of the study of a more alien language is to throw this fact into bold relief: a mind saturated with the traditions of Indian philosophy is and must always remain very different from one saturated with the traditions of European philosophy - as is *every* European mind, even when untrained and unread. What analytic philosophy attempts to do for the individual mind, the study of history - including language and literature - does for the collective mind. Neglect of Greek means for Europe *a relapse into unconsciousness.*
> (Eliot 1967h:342) [Eliot's Italics]

I would suggest that Eliot's highly metaphysical turn of phrase here is directly related to the Hegelian use of Classics in education. In studying the "alien" language of Greek (and here Eliot uses a very Hegelian term) - a process in which the mind studying it will surely become "alienated" - the student will come to understand the underlying philosophy of his own culture, and hence become part of a greater association of persons - Eliot's "collective mind". Moreover, if the Classics fall into desuetude then that “mind" will fail and civilisation will "relapse into unconsciousness". In this "unconscious" state we perhaps have a glimmer of the Hegelian particularised and "natural state" mind of the child, which needs to be educated in order to reach full humanity. The correlation between Eliot's

educational theory and Hegel's appears quite strong.

6.10. The *Sittlichkeit* Thesis

The role of education in Hegel's political system naturally leads into discussion of a central element in his political thought, that of *Sittlichkeit*, discussed above. Education in Hegelian society was meant to immerse the individual into the universal state and this state was governed by a distinct ethical life. As Hegel wrote in his essay On Natural Law, education

> ...is by definition the emerging progressive cancellation of the negative or the subjective; for the child...is something subjective or negative, whose development to manhood is the cessation of this form and whose education is the disciplining or subjugation of the form. (Hegel 1975:115)

This education, as we saw above, is both formal in schools, and within family and social groups. Hegel saw this process as simplicity itself: the child, he says,

> ...is suckled at the breast of universal ethical life...it passes over into the universal spirit. (Hegel 1975:115)

This led Hegel, in the Lectures, to make the statement about the content of ethical life and morality in general,

> The content of what is good or not good...is, in ordinary matters of private life, to be determined by the laws and customs of a state. There is no great difficulty in knowing it. (McCarney 2000:73)

This universal spirit which the educated person passed into led the child into larger social spheres, and it is these groupings of people in the state who were to live an ethical life in accord with society's aims, and this system Hegel termed *Sittlichkeit.* This might be most accurately translated (according to Kotkavirta, following

Smith), as "the institutions of ethical life" (Kotkavirta 1997:40), meaning not the formal institutions like the police but the mental parameters of everyday living. Despite this, Hegel's term is normally translated into English simply as "Ethical Life", which tends to rob it of some force.

For Hegel, everyday life was - at least in the developed state - the universal life of freedom, according to the will of *Geist*. For Hegel, as we have seen, free action is that in which persons ignore all external pressures, and concentrate solely on the rational, universal will. This system of rational actions and mores is the heart of Hegel's "ethical life", *Sittlichkeit.* It was a system which was both subjective, in that actions were the result of the individual's own powers of reason, and objective, in that being reasonable they were universal and therefore applicable to everyone. *Sittlichkeit*, in Wood's words, "...disposes the individual to do what the institutions require" (Wood 1991:xii). The ethical life of the state was the union of duty and desire; in it, human nature was a harmonious whole, and freedom was not curtailed but enhanced. Everyone, it would appear, was happy and self-fulfilled. As Wood again suggests, in the "rational society" in which *Sittlichkeit* flourishes,

> ...the demands of social life do not frustrate the needs of individuals...duty fulfils individuality rather than suppressing it. In such a society rational individuals...need not make great sacrifices in order to give priority to right or duty... (Wood 1991:xii)

Hegel's view of *Sittlichkeit* had developed over many years and was not just present in Philosophy of Right. An early formulation of it appeared in what is known as the Early Theological Writings composed between 1793 and 1800. In studying the religious customs of the ancient world of the Greeks, Romans and

Jews, Hegel saw that they provided a framework of rational ethical life which formed the basis of the societies in which they were practised. He termed these religions "folk religions", or the "religion of the People", the *Volk*. It was a force which united the citizens of a nation, and it asked "...individuals to assume responsibility for acting ethically in the world" (Dickey 1999:xix). Christianity, Hegel argued, was similar: it was a religion of *Sittlichkeit*, for it asked its adherents to realise the "spark of divinity" which God had implanted in them (Dickey 1999:xix). Hegel saw in the teachings of Jesus an expectation that his principles would be carried into the world by his followers, "...forming communities of religious fellowship in the process" (Dickey 1999:xix). This idea Hegel expanded in his essay On Natural Law, which Eliot may well have read. Here, Hegel proposes a complex system of ethical life which comprehends the whole life of the people in an organic unity, which Hegel termed "organic ethical life" (Hegel 1975:66). This was not a *natural* state of affairs; human beings did not enjoy ethical life by simple biology. "The state of nature", according to Hegel, enjoyed only "...moments of organic ethical life" (Hegel 1975:66). It was fragmentary; human beings had to organise and educate themselves in what Hegel called "...actualised communities of ethical life" and develop out of their natural state in order that their true destiny in the state could be realised. This view of organic ethical life was not just the social and ethical mores of a particular people in a particular place which had developed over time; it was a "positive principle" that "...absolute ethical totality is nothing other than a *people"* (Hegel 1975:92) [Hegel's Italics]. In other words, the *Sittlichkeit* of the people was the People

itself; to describe the People was to describe their ethical life, and vice versa. Whoever was raised in any particular place was bound to be imbued with its *Sittlichkeit*; it was therefore also the dynamic force in both individuals and groups. There could be no conflict of aims, logically. Hegel summed up this organic union of the one and the many with the following (and telling) quotations from the Ancient World:

> As regards ethical life, the saying of the wisest men of antiquity is alone true, that "to be ethical is to live in accordance with the ethics of one's country." And as regards education, the reply of a Pythagorean to the question "What is the best education for my son?" is "Make him a citizen of a well-ordered state." (Hegel 1975:115)

that is, the state with *Sittlichkeit.* However, *Sittlichkeit* was not simply for the attaining of the Good Life within society, much as the ancient Greeks saw it. It was also an integral part of the unfolding of *Geist*. Being rational, *Sittlichkeit* partook of the nature of *Geist*, and in living by the norms of ethical life each citizen, in Taylor's words, enjoys

> ...his essential relation to the ontological structure, the other being in the modes of consciousness which Hegel calls "absolute spirit", and this real relation through the life of the community is essential to the completion of the return to conscious identity between man and the Absolute.
> (Taylor 1979:93)

Ethical life became the interface of rationality between humanity and *Geist*; by living *Sittlichkeit*, man became spiritual as well as ethical. In this sense, by living successfully the ethical life, human beings became truly *free.* As Patten suggests, freedom and *Sittlichkeit* are "reciprocal concepts":

> Freedom consists in rational self-determination and this means engaging in actions that one can fully endorse on a

> rational basis. Freedom and ethics are reciprocally linked, because in acting ethically an individual is contributing to the realisation of an end that is partially constitutive of his status as a free agent - the preservation and promotion of his own freedom. (Patten 1999:101)

In a sense, Hegel's theory of freedom is Hobbes' turned on its head. In the former, individuals band together and live by *Sittlichkeit* in order to become truly free and self-realised; in the latter, people give up their freedom in order to be preserved. The state, as Hegel observed, is the arena for the development of this higher form of freedom; it is "...the actuality of concrete freedom" (Hegel 1991b:282).

One potential and not inconsiderable problem for the theory of *Sittlichkeit* is that which Patten calls "under-determination". There is simply not enough *practical content* to Hegel's theory with which to work. Patten suggests that

> Faced with some practical dilemma, a given individual might find himself pulled in conflicting directions by the demands of the different institutions and traditions of his community. (Patten 1999:2)

Patten cites the Sartre dilemma in the novel sequence Les chemins de la liberté of the young man who suffers a crisis of choice between his duty as a family member to care for his parent, and his duty as a citizen to join the Resistance Movement in occupied France. *Sittlichkeit*, Patten argues, would find it difficult to see a way forward, although Hegel would claim that it would be "quite simple". This is a fair criticism; Hegel appears to leave *Sittlichkeit* purely in the speculative realm and he does not trouble to give concrete examples of ethical choices. He seems to operate on a plane where ethical choices are somehow also logical choices, as if the whole system were mathematical. Hegel's system, like Eliot's in The Idea of a Christian Society, relies upon a monoculture with no conflicting interests inside it. The

modern world, in its pluralism, is in one view simply too diverse in its ethical situations and mores for the *Sittlichkeit* thesis to work satisfactorily; there are just too many variations of what is ethical. Taylor also makes a similar point, in suggesting that in Hegel's ethical life "...there is no gap between what ought to be and what is" (Taylor 1979:83). Perhaps Hegel was reticent in listing the actual content of *Sittlichkeit* because in so doing he might have limited it. For how does one describe something which, by definition, is in process of development? Hegel, perhaps, preferred to describe the dynamics of *Sittlichkeit* and left it for participating societies to determine in their own way its content. This would, in one view, be the most faithful interpretation of Hegel's own philosophy. As with Eliot, Hegel was not intending his description of society to be "a blueprint". He did not want to describe a society which, in particulars, had just vanished as the last word about it had been written - another Minervan owl. In describing in general terms the way society operated, Hegel was enabling it to be applied to a variety of different nations, although his main sphere of interest was of course the Germanic countries.

6.11. Eliot and *Sittlichkeit*

Does Eliot in his social criticism display elements of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*? When one considers Eliot's notion of "the Christian Community" in The Idea of a Christian Society, there appear some correlations. As we saw above, the Christian Community is the majority of Christian Society, in contrast with the "Community of Christians" who are the movers and shakers within society, in regards to its

Christian purposes. Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* theory rested on the *naturalness* of ethical life, that is, its organic nature. The child was "....suckled at the breast of universal ethical life" in its upbringing and education; "...there is no great difficulty in knowing it". In being born into a certain culture, a child naturally developed into that culture and imbibed its mores; it was a process of osmosis, almost. Eliot had a similar theory. In the Christian Community, he stated,

> ...the Christian faith would be ingrained, but it requires, as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behaviour.
> (Eliot 1939:58)

Clearly Eliot considered the Christian faith to be the basis of the ethical life of the Christian society, something which Hegel does not actually specify. However, Eliot in dealing with his larger group of citizens, tends to treat Christianity as some kind of *Sittlichkeit* of the people. It is the citizens' traditional theoretical life; they are to be educated "in Christian categories" and their social, working and domestic lives are to be lived in ecclesiastical units of parishes - particular places, or *Sitten*. But like *Sittlichkeit* it is not mere theory: it is actuality, the very life of the people, for Eliot suggests that for the member of the Christian Community

> ...their capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith is small; their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour... (Eliot 1939:58)

The whole of their religious and social life is governed by the ethical life of Christianity. There does appear to be an Hegelian tincture at least to Eliot's Christian Community.

This appears even stronger when one considers Hegel's specific observations on the religious nature of ancient societies. As we saw above, Hegel observed in the

"*Volk* religions" of the ancient world, and also in modern-day Christianity, a certain disposition which united a nation around a set of principles which demanded action. This people were to do in "...communities of religious fellowship" which were at the same time "...actualised communities of ethical life". Eliot's Christian Community was united around a shared Christian faith which we have seen was to be more lived than thought. Eliot didn't leave the process there, however: this living the Christian life in English Society, English *Sittlichkeit,* was to be done in a particular setting, the local parish, essentially an ecclesiastical area which could trace its origins in fact to the Roman Villa system of the second century. Eliot as we have seen called the parish the "community unit"; it was the natural unit of social and religious life, presumably large enough for its inhabitants' everyday lives but small enough to be cohesive. It is interesting that Eliot bases his whole religious-ethical-social setting in the parish, a particular *place*; this we have seen was a concept encapsulated in the very word *Sittlichkeit* and indeed according to Hegel the Greek term *ethics.* It was argued above that in some ways Eliot's parish mirrors the Hegelian Corporation, but it also mirrors Hegel's concrete ethical communities and an organic system of organisation. The way society was organised in The Idea of a Christian Society is by its religious principles. Its people fall into divisions by way of their Christian faith; they live in ecclesiastical areas; and their social lives are governed by an in-dwelling Christian faith. To describe the citizens of Eliot's society is to describe their Christian lives, and to describe the Christian life of the Society is to describe its inhabitants and this is at the heart too of Hegel's theory of *Sittlichkeit.*

The above is true for both Eliot's Christian Community and in certain ways for

the Community of Christians. They were expected to live and work within parishes, and their ethical life would be the same as their fellows. The difference was their ability to *reflect* on the content of Christian belief. This group had no real correlation, ethically speaking, in Hegel: the Civil Service is the nearest equivalent, and Eliot's Community of Christians is too "nebulous in outline" to fulfil a similar task. However, although Hegel does on one level suggest that *everyone* in his society is capable of achieving the ultimate goal of being a member of the rational state, he is on another level more realistic that many will never do so. Hegel would, in the end, have to settle on a two-track citizenry, and this would not be so dissimilar from Eliot's. This might be seen when one considers the ultimate aim of society in both of our authors. For Hegel, as Taylor suggested above, this was "...the conscious identity between man and the Absolute", in order for the Absolute to complete the process of self-realisation. For those who could not develop this rationality, there would still be benefits of living in Civil Society, and some form of self-fulfilment but necessarily of a fragmentary nature. Hegel defined this in the following words:

> This substantial unity [of the State and "the substantial *will*"] is an absolute and unmoved end in itself, and in it, freedom enters into its highest right, just as this ultimate end possesses the highest right in relation to individuals, whose *highest duty* is to be member of the state.
> (Hegel 1991b:275) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel couches this description of the goal of the state in religious terms, and Eliot's idea of the final destination of society is also religious. However, at the beginning we must say that Hegel's vision of the state was fulfilment in this world: *Geist* would reach self-realisation *in* the state, rather than its citizens progressing *from* the

state to “beatitude”. Eliot's idea for society is, in Christian terms, more orthodox, although it does have certain Hegelian overtones. For the Community of Christians, the Christian Society was the bed from which they were to rise to what Eliot called "beatitude", a "supernatural state". For the Christian Community, however, Christian Society had a lesser function, that in which "...the natural end of man - virtue and well-being…is acknowledged." Exactly what this "beatitude" of the "supernatural end" of man might be, Eliot does not explain. He does not state that the destiny of the Community of Christians is the Kingdom of Heaven, and that all the Christian Community can hope for is a secular good life. However, we must also say that Eliot is terse on the relationship between the Kingdom of God and human society, and on whether the latter is the preparation for the former or whether the Kingdom of Heaven will appear in the world. Eliot's omission on this point is interesting, but we cannot see much beyond that, although on one level Eliot's "beatitude" might be read as similar to Hegel's "...absolute and unmoved end in itself."

As suggested above, both Eliot and Hegel's ethical systems are "underdetermined". Neither wishes to formulate a system for their societies. Eliot explicitly does not wish his The Idea of a Christian Society to be a "blueprint", and nor does he on the whole tie down his descriptions to a particular time or place, although his stress on parishes is obviously English. Eliot sees that different Christian societies will have different political modes and organisations; he is concerned instead with the fundamental basis on which a society can be *Christian.* Society in the United States, the Colonies, even in Wales, Eliot suggests, would be

different from England. How, then, can every society have the same kind of basic "community unit" as England? In the United States, as Eliot would have known, the parish system was never such a fundamental part of life; Churches, not being established like in England, never had any role to play in government. This was also true of Wales, since the disestablishment of the Church in Wales in the 1920's; the colonies were another moot point. At this juncture, we might suggest, like Patten of Hegel using the Sartre razor, that Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society lacks depth in particularity. It relies upon an assumption of cultural uniformity which historically is perhaps a myth in England, and doubtless in every nation. Like Hegel, Eliot's Minervan Owl had already flown by the time of The Idea of a Christian Society's publication.

An important difference between Hegel and Eliot in their notions of ethical life is freedom. For Hegel, this was fundamental. In living together ethically, citizens would enjoy a degree of self-fulfilment and freedom they would not enjoy in particularity. Freedom is not a concept Eliot dwelled upon frequently. He was not interested in the political side of freedom, being suspicious that it was a dangerous concept akin to liberalism and anarchy, both of which ultimately led to totalitarianism. He reserved his use of the concept - at least in his poetry - almost exclusively for religious purposes, as in the line from Burnt Norton "The inner freedom from the practical desire" (Eliot 1969:173), which might contain an echo of the Hegelian notion that to be free was to exercise the rational will, freed from external (practical?) influences. Overall, Eliot does not adopt freedom as a political or social term.

Another concept missing from Eliot but which was important for the Hegelian system was that of law. Law for Hegel was objectified *Sittlichkeit*. "When what is *right in itself*", he wrote,

> ...is posited in its objective existence - i.e. determined by thought for consciousness and *known* as what is right and valid - it becomes *law*...right itself becomes *positive* right in general. (Hegel 1991b:241) [Hegel's Italics]

This was a process of bringing something which is *right in itself* "...to the consciousness as a universal" (Hegel 1991b:241). Thus *Sittlichkeit* is not something which hangs around in the ether; it is also at hand in the law books. There is no conflict between these written and unspoken rules: "...the valid laws of the nation do not cease to be its customs merely because they have been written down and collected" (Hegel 1991b:241). Thus the child in Hegel's state can learn his ethical life both in his mother's milk *and* by reading. Hegel spends some twenty or so sections of Philosophy of Right in outlining the system of law and its implementation. Eliot, by contrast, has scant interest in the role of law. He makes little mention of it in The Idea of a Christian Society. The word appears only six times in his Collected Poems and three of these are in "Macavity: the Mystery Cat". This absence of law might be seen to be odd given Eliot's religious nature. The element of law, whether positive or negative, is strong in Christianity. The Ten Commandments, for example, were to be read at each celebration of Holy Communion, according to The Book of Common Prayer. But here we must be careful. Eliot's early upbringing in Transcendentalist Unitarianism put the stress much more upon the inner disposition of the soul than external order, and Eliot would rarely have heard the Ten Commandments in any Church service - St

Stephen's, Gloucester Road, where he worshipped, was a church which used the English Missal instead of the Book of Common Prayer and the Ten Commandments were not part of the liturgy.[32] Eliot preferred instead, it seems, to put his trust in the keeping of his version of the ethical life in the sheer power of the Idea of Christianity, that internal disposition of the soul.

6.12. The Alienated Life

Both authors have a mind set against the consequences of the Industrial Revolution in society.[33] This, for Hegel, was the main cause of social and political alienation. As we saw above, Hegel had a vision of society which was based primarily on the soil and its products. Any substantial move away from this organicism would have profound effects on the character of the citizens. A person's work was supposed to be his own, made with his own hands or mind. The introduction of machine production was for Hegel a dangerous phenomenon. In The Phenomenology of Spirit, for example, Hegel suggested that

> ...in the machine, man suspends...[the] formal activity of his own and lets it do all the work for him. But this deceit that he practices against nature...takes its revenge upon him; what he gains from nature and the more he subdues it, the lower he sinks himself...the more machinelike labour becomes, the less it is worth and the more one must work in

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[32] I owe this information to the late Donald Nicholson, sometime Curate at St Stephen's, who shared lodgings with Eliot in the Vicarage.

[33] We use this term in the knowledge that this "Revolution" was a process rather than an event, and that during the process some areas of Europe *de*-industrialised, such as the Weald of Sussex.

that mode. (Hegel 1977:134)

Hegel also talked of "the machine state", with workers as cogs, whose minds are "...impoverished to the last extremes of dullness" (Hegel 1977:136). This detachment from the fundamental reason for work - which Hegel described as "...the purely particular activity and occupation of the individual [which] refers to the needs which he has..." (Hegel 1977:213)[34] - leads ultimately both to alienation from the natural process of production by which man is able to see the universal element in his own labour, and also to an atrophy in his faculty of reason, in that his will is not involved in the production process. This ultimately led to instability in society, with sections of the populace distanced from the rational political processes.

Eliot too had a fear of industrialisation. In the 1934 After Strange Gods, he lectured his Virginian audience on the evils of modern society which was "...worm-eaten with liberalism" (Eliot 1943:13). In Virginia modernity had been held at bay. There was still an organic tradition in the Southern States, which had not yet been afflicted with what Eliot called

> ...the immense pressure towards monotony exerted by the industrial expansion of the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century.
> (Eliot 1934:16)

This "monotony" produced an unvaried culture and one which, by the influx of foreigners, ensured that local cultures were obliterated. He warned the Virginians of the threat from the industrialised Northern States; but he was also sanguine in that

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[34] In exercising this *particular* activity (a function of Civil Society), the labourer eventually gains participation in the *universal*, realising that what he produces is "for all".

> You [i.e. the Virginians] are far away from New York; you have been less industrialised and less invaded by foreign races; and you have a more opulent soil. (Eliot 1934:16)

This shows Eliot's core social beliefs in their most extreme forms, which although present in the later The Idea of a Christian Society, are muted. Eliot credits urbanisation with social decline; his vision for society, like Hegel's, was primarily rural. The forces of industrialisation and its enlarged labour-force bring havoc to the organic communities of "natural" society. And, tellingly spelled out for us here, Eliot credits the Southern States with a good soil, which was literally the basis for a healthy society. In the Southern States, there was a "life of significant soil", and this soil Eliot seems to reverence - it is far more than the mere earth in the fields; it has a metaphysical significance. All these facets of Eliot's thoughts have a certain resonance in Hegel's system.

6.13. A Conclusion: Similarities and Differences

At this juncture, it may be worthwhile to consider what the foregoing might show us as to the similarities and differences between Hegel and Eliot. We are bound to note major differences between the two authors' political and social systems. First, there is a question of their theology. Hegel, especially in the notion of *Geist* that is central to his whole philosophy, cannot be said to be fully orthodox, although he sees the role of the (Reformed) Church as crucial in society's development. Eliot appears never less than orthodox and soundly within the Anglican tradition. Second, Eliot would not have placed an emphasis upon freedom as would Hegel, which was the

goal of his human society and also that of *Geist.* Third, Eliot's conception is that society is static; there is no grand process of evolution throughout history as there is in Hegel, although in his literary criticism Eliot does use such a theory.

However, there are I believe sufficient likenesses between their writing which suggest that Eliot adopts Hegelian ideas. The idea of a living and vibrant (literary) Tradition, unfolding throughout history, a key to understanding Eliot's work, might be seen as a distinctive form of Hegel's *Geist*. The concept of "Mind" is also close to Eliot's heart - we have the "European Mind", for example, and the English Mind. Eliot chooses to express his theory of art in Hegelian terminology. His theory of education also mirrors Hegel's, in the need for the mind to be "alienated" in the study of different cultures (in both cases, the Classical world), and then returned to its own with deeper understanding.

Eliot's adapted Hegelianism may be seen throughout The Idea of a Christian Society. I have argued that it is fundamentally a work from the Idealist school. It is centred around the position that a society exists as the unified embodiment of an idea; Eliot is at pains to define the word "idea" in a way that suggests it is an organic, objective force. He dresses his definition using the words of Coleridge, as if to establish his work in the English tradition. But Coleridge is, I suggest, merely a bridge, the end of which lands in the heart of Germany, at the feet of Hegel. Eliot's The Criterion had already hinted at this, when Every, reviewing White's The Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge - a book of *crambe repetita* if ever there were one - suggested that Coleridge's "Idealism was not Kant's. For Coleridge the ideas are

'one with the very power and life of nature.'"[35] These words would have crossed Eliot's editorial desk in the autumn of 1938, when he was preparing to write the lectures which would become The Idea of a Christian Society (and see Chapter 9).

There is an Hegelian strand running throughout The Idea of a Christian Society. Central to it is the religious underpinning of society. Hegel's theory of politics shared a very similar underpinning, and as we saw Eliot marked the phrase "society rests upon religion" in The Lectures. This religious practice has to be uniform, conscious for some people and unconscious for others. Both Hegel and Eliot assume the existence of a kind of *Volk*, all of whose members share the same mores, faith and language. This is brought sharply into focus in Eliot by his insistence upon the *Englishness* of his book, and that it would not be appropriate for the Welsh, a stance which otherwise might seem eccentric. Eliot was rarely interested in Britain, only ever England - *History is now and England.* Indeed, it is hard to find references to Britain in Eliot's oeuvre.

Eliot's insistence on the family also mirrors Hegel's. It underpins the Christian ethos of the whole nation and like Hegel's family it is the basic building block of the state. Civil Society in Hegel was the next level of the state, and in this Hegel's Corporations have a certain resonance in Eliot's notion of parishes. There are differences, of course; but both Corporations and Parishes are organic units in which individuals form wider social bonds than in the family. It is important to bear in mind here that Eliot's ideas are compressed, and leave much to the asking, but I believe

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[35] In The Criterion, V XVIII, October 1938, p. 128.

there is sufficient to show Hegelian leanings. Like the use of Coleridge's definition of "idea", Eliot in his use of the parishes as the "community unit" of England can be seen as an attempt to ground his theory in an English tradition, Hegel's concept of the Corporation not having a natural equivalent. Eliot's parochial system seems eccentric and unworkable, an attempt to translate the rural organic community as expressed in East Coker into what had become, by 1939, a largely urban country.

Hegel's system was monarchical, as was Eliot's until the Abdication Crisis, after which he became virtually silent on the subject. I would argue that, if the Crisis had not occurred then The Idea of a Christian Society would have been completed with the figure of the monarch. This would finish the geometry of the book, topping off the pyramid of the state, with families at the base and the parishes in the middle. Its omission makes society as conceived by Eliot looking flat, a featureless plain of micro-communities which make up the nation; there is no tier of mediation between the parishes and the state, as there is in Hegel.

The ethics of society are in both authors best described by Hegel's term *Sittlichkeit*. It is a system of ethical life which is organic and local, learned at mother's breast and broken only with danger to the unity of society as a whole. English society is governed by Christian principles which, for Eliot (as well as for Hegel, in the final analysis) are a matter of habit. Ethics are the blood of the people; to describe the people is to describe their *Sittlichkeit*, and vice versa. Although the ethical life of both systems is what we might call natural, it was not without its serious flaws. A problem was that of the non-compliant member of society who chose not to live by its ethics. Neither of our authors sufficiently accommodates

these persons. This is, perhaps, a problem at the heart of Idealist systems of society - the wish for harmony and connectedness over-rides differences of opinion; what I have called the imperative of integration allows no variation of ideology or practice.

Taken alongside the literary echoes, borrowings and indeed paraphrases from Hegel, there is I suggest a very strong case to be made that Eliot in his social and political thought in the period under review, and especially in its later stages, returned to his Hegelian roots. With the West facing disaster from the rise of continental Fascism and Bolshevism, both of which drew strength from their unified ideologies and societies, Eliot believed that only by adopting a similar unitary system, this time based on Christianity, would England survive. Unity was indeed strength in Eliot's world. This concept was one of the touch-stones of his Absolute Idealist inheritance, and it was to that philosophy's political thought that Eliot turned, with increasing desperation, in the shadows of the Second World War.

Part Three:
Four Objections to the Thesis

All truths are connected - Appearance and Reality (Bradley 1946:125)

On Margate sands
I can connect
Nothing with nothing - "The Waste Land" (Eliot 1969:70)

Introduction

There are a number of serious objections to this thesis which will have to be dealt with before we conclude. These are neatly summed up in the two quotations above. Absolute Idealism - in some ways at least - may be summarised by the statement from Bradley, that everything is ultimately connected. Eliot's putative rejection of Idealism, which will be discussed below, is encapsulated in the Margate Sands lines of "The Waste Land".

Overall, it seems that there are four main problems which confront anyone attempting to chart the persistence of Absolute Idealist philosophy in Eliot's mind between 1916 and 1939 and whether it played a part in forming Eliot's political and social thought. First, Eliot appeared disparaging of his own philosophical endeavours in his main contribution to the discipline, his doctoral dissertation published in 1964 as Knowledge and Experience. Second, Eliot virtually never

admits any debt to any Absolute Idealist in his own career and often appears antagonistic to Absolute Idealists (especially Hegel). Third, soon after abandoning his professional philosophical career his critical work seems to adopt a "scientific" model in line with the sea-change in philosophy away from Idealism to science-based Realism, as championed by Bertrand Russell. And fourth, and with particular interest to our concern with The Idea of a Christian Society, Eliot's admitted influences in social and political affairs were his contemporaries, such as Demant and Dawson, and not his long-dead and seemingly rejected philosophical masters.

In what follows, I shall endeavour to raise each objection and then attempt to deal with its main points.

Chapter 7. Eliot shuns Absolute Idealism

7.1. Objection One: Eliot's "unintelligible" Dissertation

> That was a way of putting it - not very satisfactory:
> A periphrastic study in a worn out...fashion "East Coker" (Eliot 1969:179)

> Forty-six years after my academic philosophizing came to an end, I find myself unable to think in the terminology of this essay. Indeed, I do not pretend to understand it.
> Knowledge and Experience (Eliot 1964:10)

What is the importance to our study of Eliot's 1964 publication of his Harvard Doctoral Thesis? Although its contents are ostensibly far removed from the social criticism we are examining here, being concerned with a small facet of Bradley's epistemology, I would argue that Eliot's attitude to his thesis and his wish for it to be published are relevant for our undertaking. This shows, I believe, that Eliot's mind in 1964 was still operating within an Absolute Idealist framework and it marks, in some way, a public declaration of this. My argument is simply this: if Eliot could, as late as 1964, publish his major philosophical work, then it might be argued that he never abandoned other Absolute Idealist ideas, either, such as in politics and social theory. As Mallinson argues in her 2002 T S Eliot's Interpretation of F H Bradley,

> The dissertation which Eliot completed in 1916 is the repository of his philosophical investigations up to that time and the source of many of his subsequent ideas.
> (Mallinson 2002:1)

and

> The concepts of the disassociation of sensibility and of the impersonality of the poet...[are] rooted in the dissertation's engagement with the work of Bradley. (Mallinson 2002:2-3)

However, there is much argument against this view, and the most plangent from Eliot himself. We will have to examine this carefully before my case can be seen.

Much scholarly opinion has been happy to concur with Eliot's own apparent dismissal of his thesis. Manju Jain, for example, calls it a "haunted" book, and in its

> ...tortured obscurity...it is often difficult to disentangle the inferences that Eliot draws from Bradley's arguments from a statement of his own views. (Jain 1992:205)

According to Ackroyd, it is in places "...quite unintelligible" (Ackroyd 1984:69), and to the professional Wollheim it is "...a painfully obscure work" (Wollheim 1970:170). Gordon suggests that in the dissertation "...Eliot's tortuous style obscures the content so that the dissertation is almost unreadable" (Gordon 1977:51). There are more negative comments in the literature - indeed, there are few positive - such as Thompson's, that Knowledge and Experience is "...unreadable..." and "...formidable" (Thompson 1969:18). Overall, modern commentators seem to dismiss Knowledge and Experience as an example of late British Idealism, where that strand of philosophy has reached its natural end.

Do these criticisms, however, add up to anything substantial alongside Eliot's own critique? Probably not. They are for the most part the thoughts of non-specialists such as Ackroyd and Gordon, whose interests in Knowledge and Experience are primarily biographical and literary. Nor has any critic made a comment on what is perhaps the most important single facet of Knowledge and

Experience: it lacks a large part of its conclusion, presumably lost forever during its long years' sojourn in the library of Harvard University. Eliot's definitive ideas on Bradley's philosophy cannot therefore be properly known. Eliot's substitute for the missing pages at its 1964 publication - his later essays "The Development of Leibnitz' Monadism" and "Leibnitz' Monadism and Bradley's Finite Centres" - have not garnered any comment at all - even in Mallinson's study - although they are surely significant unless Eliot intended them to be a page-filler. According to the "Preface", these two essays are in "...partial compensation for the loss of the concluding page or pages" (Eliot 1964:11), and are a kind of conclusion.

In these two essays, Eliot perhaps takes a chance at re-concluding his thoughts on Bradley. The extant manuscript of Knowledge and Experience ended with the unfinished sentence "For if all objectivity and all knowledge is relative..." (Eliot 1964:176). This open-endedness Eliot decided to change to the much more conclusive new final sentence,

> And this emphasis upon practice - upon the relativity and the instrumentality of knowledge - is what impels us towards the Absolute... (Eliot 1964:176)

It is important to realise here what Eliot was attempting. If he were solely after the publication of Knowledge and Experience as a purely biographical and historical piece, as he claimed in its "Preface", then why change the ending of the extant manuscript? And why append the two extra essays as a kind of alternative conclusion? The answer must be that Eliot was trying to finish the book some forty years after he abandoned it. Perhaps he still felt himself, in 1964, as "impelled towards the Absolute" as he had in 1916, although we might suggest that by 1964

his earlier Absolute had acquired a name in the Holy Trinity of Christian doctrine. Moreover, Eliot's "new" final sentence to the dissertation brought it more in line with the last sentence of Bradley's Appearance and Reality, which ended with the line

> Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and, the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real. (Eliot 1964:176)

Perhaps we might see Eliot consciously aligning the conclusion of Knowledge and Experience with that of Bradley.

The two essays might also suggest that in Knowledge and Experience he was formally repatriating Absolute Idealism into his life and work. In the first essay, the 1916 "The Development of Leibnitz' Monadism", Eliot is at pains to point out that Leibnitz bridged the gap between ancient and modern philosophy. In his doctrine of monads, he "...restored to life…the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle" (Eliot 1964:197). Leibnitz, therefore, in Eliot's eyes stood like the artist before tradition in the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", not only ready to bow down to what had gone before, but also to reinterpret it and move it forward. In his thinking on monads, Leibnitz did this by "...open(ing) the way for modern idealism" (Eliot 1964:197). All philosophy, therefore, like all art, truly understood was part of an unfolding of tradition. Each segment was valid and able to inspire those who looked to it.

In the second and shorter essay, "Leibnitz' Monads and Bradley's Finite Centres", first published alongside "The Development of Leibnitz' Monadism" in the October 1916 The Monist, Eliot moves on the argument. In the first essay, the

reader was told how Leibnitz occupied a pivotal role in the history of Western philosophy. He was ancient and modern, idealist and realist. In the second, Eliot argues that Bradley is a superior philosopher to Leibnitz, in some respects. Over the question of monads, for example:

> Bradley's Monadism is in some ways a great advance beyond Leibnitz'...It unquestionably presents clearness where in Leibnitz we find confusion...Bradley is a much more skilful, much more finished philosopher than Leibnitz. (Eliot 1967:207)

The second essay can be seen as a eulogy on Bradley's philosophy which is the counterpart to the eulogy on Bradley's artistic style published in 1926 after Bradley's death, in “Bradley's Ethical Studies”. If the latter showed how much Eliot wanted to emulate his master in writing clear and concise prose, then the former showed him reverencing the philosophy behind that "melancholy grace" and "languid mastery" (Eliot 1964:207). Overall, Knowledge and Experience's Absolute Idealist message can be seen to have remained with Eliot even in 1964 and he still thought it important enough to attempt some kind of conclusion to its lost thesis. This is in sharp contrast to his poetry, where he never attempted such an undertaking of completing his unfinished work, such as “Unfinished Poems”. Knowledge and Experience's publication in 1964 perhaps meant that it was considered by Eliot himself as part of his official Canon and he wanted it as complete and as well-presented as possible.

However, despite these observations it is not at first glance easy to overcome Eliot's own disparagement of Knowledge and Experience. At the publication of the work in 1964 Eliot wrote perhaps its most plangent criticism within its own pages.

It was dedicated "To my wife", "...who urged me to publish this essay" (Eliot 1964:7). Perhaps Valerie, therefore, should take the blame for its appearance; Eliot seems reluctant to let it have a wider audience. He appears to hide behind his wife. Also it should be noted that Eliot calls it his "essay", not his book, thesis, or dissertation. By calling it an essay, he ranks it with the contents, perhaps, of his Selected Essays, although it is twenty times longer than any piece in that collection.

In the "Preface", Eliot also seems to distance himself from its contents. In a paragraph of unstinting hostility to his own work, Eliot states

> Forty-six years after my academic philosophising came to an end, I find myself unable to think in the terminology of this essay. Indeed, I do not pretend to understand it. As philosophising, it may appear to most modern philosophers to be quaintly antiquated. I can present this book only as a curiosity of biographical interest, which shows, as my wife observed at once, how closely my own prose style was formed on that of Bradley and how little it has changed in all these years. It was she who urged me to publish it.
>
> (Eliot 1964:10-11)

Eliot appears apologetic. But there are a number of misleading suggestions in the above paragraph. Eliot finds himself *unable to think in the terminology of this essay* - but is its terminology different from its content? The way of expressing the ideas in Knowledge and Experience had, by 1964, decayed. But the *burden* of their message, the nature of Ideas and Reality, it can be suggested, Eliot still believed in 1964 as he did in 1916. It was the *terminology*, rather than its central message, which Eliot could not understand; but that he must have been able to understand *something* about it is implied in the comment that it would appear *antiquated*.

Despite this change in the terminology of Knowledge and Experience, Eliot would surely not have allowed something he had written to be published if he did

not understand it, especially given the extreme caution he displayed over the rest of his oeuvre, no matter what pressure Valerie had put him under, which one imagines was not a great deal. Eliot in the Preface to Knowledge and Experience is as slippery as he appeared in that to For Lancelot Andrewes. It was, perhaps, designed to disarm the reader and defend the writer from a potentially hostile readership, that of academic philosophers. By 1964 Bradley and his Hegelian colleagues such as Bosanquet were long out of fashion. In the meantime Logical Positivists had divested philosophy of much of its metaphysical content and such an "essay" as Knowledge and Experience would have perhaps appeared as a piece of antiquated idealism. Eliot was on the defensive. That Knowledge and Experience was so out of fashion perhaps suggests, ironically, that Eliot passionately believed in its message, or else he would not have agreed to its publication, which may have harmed his cherished reputation. Certainly we may assume it was not published merely for *biographical interest*, given Eliot's loathing of his private life being discussed in the public domain. That he should consider seriously that Knowledge and Experience had any biographical content at all is moreover risible; surely there can be fewer books written which contain *less* information about its author. Its appearance in 1964, we may assume with some confidence, was because Eliot believed it to a be a serious work the message of which he still believed in. That it was published at the time when Eliot was revising substantial parts of his oeuvre also suggests that it was in the mainstream of his life's work. That its style was still the same as he possessed in 1964 - according to the “Preface” - is another example of Eliot repatriating it into his canon.

Another argument that Eliot considered Knowledge and Experience as orthodox in his own canon comes in the fact that Eliot, after the manuscript of the dissertation was discovered by Professor Ann Bolgan in the archives of Harvard University, allowed it to be published by his own firm, Faber and Faber. It was perhaps part of Eliot's

> ...fight to recover what has been lost
> And found and lost again and again. (Eliot 1969:182)

Eliot was always exceptionally careful in what work of his should be published. Parts which he realised were controversial but insubstantial, or did not adequately reflect his true beliefs, he did not allow to be reprinted. After Strange Gods, for example, has been kept in its shroud since 1934. For Lancelot Andrewes shared the same fate, being reissued as Essays Ancient and Modern in 1936 but with very significant deletions: gone were the intriguing preface and the eccentric (and Hegelian) essay on Machiavelli, and that on Richard Crashaw. For Lancelot Andrewes did not go to another edition in Eliot's lifetime. Eliot's continual refining of his Selected Essays shows the same preoccupation with presenting an agreeable public front. Thus the appearance of his dissertation suggested that Eliot considered it a worthy edition to the Eliot canon, and that it would not detract from its overall worth. That is was not published earlier is simply that the manuscript was presumed lost. That it was published by Faber and Faber, his beloved firm of which he himself had been an architect almost from its beginning, shows that he considered it a piece on which it was worth staking the company's reputation. That Faber and Faber published it in such large numbers - its 5,040 copies were 3,000 more than the first edition of The Idea of a Christian Society, and almost as many as the first edition of

Four Quartets and Notes Towards the Definition of Culture, both of which had 6,000 (Gallup 1969:75) - suggests that Eliot was willing for it to have a wide audience, or that Faber and Faber knew a good marketing opportunity when it saw one. Eliot, of course, could have had it printed and distributed privately, as he had his Poems Written in Early Youth, which had only twelve copies published in his lifetime, and those distributed privately (Gallup 1969:84). Whatever the reasons behind its issue, the volume of Knowledge and Experience's sales surely makes it one of the most successful of maiden philosophical works ever. Its author's self-criticism should not be taken as anything other than a convenient smoke-screen. We must look elsewhere to find a convincing argument against Eliot's continuing Idealism from 1916.

7.2. Objection Two: Eliot's Monstrous, Grotesque and Corrupt Idealists

Eliot virtually never admits any debt to any Idealist philosopher in his own career (with the exception of Bradley) and often appears antagonistic to Idealist thinkers (especially Hegel). If one were to consult an index to Eliot's works of the period 1916-1939, such as to The Criterion, The Sacred Wood or Selected Essays, one would not find many references to Idealist philosophers, and what does emerge is usually unsympathetic. Moreover, as late as 1932 he was dismissing the Idealists as unimportant, as in his comment in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism

> I have read some of Hegel and Fichte...and forgotten it.

(Eliot 1933:77-78)

These attitudes, at least at face value, are seemingly incontrovertible evidence that Eliot was *not* an Idealist himself.

In this period, there are no mentions at all in Eliot's work of either Berkeley or Kant except for the latter being somewhat idiosyncratically listed as an example of a nineteenth-century philosopher in The Clark Lectures of 1926[36]. These two paragons of Idealism seem to have entirely slipped out of Eliot's sights, and this despite Eliot's close study of Kant as a post-graduate student. It was as though they did not exist. The same cannot be said of Hegel, who does make some entrance into Eliot's written work. He appears as a kind of historic demon figure, summing up all Eliot found disagreeable. Hegel was German, Protestant, may be described as part of the Romantic movement, and was a supporter of political revolution. These categories of Eliot's antagonism are worth further inspection.

Hegel's Teutonic background perhaps found Eliot naturally antipathetic. He was an instinctive Greco-Roman in things cultural, more Virgil and Dante than Goethe. In The Criterion of October 1923, a propos of the current debate about the status of the Classics in English education, Eliot wrote

> The fact is, of course, that *all* European civilisations are equally dependent upon Greece and Rome...If everything derived from Rome were withdrawn...what would be left? A few Teutonic roots and husks. England is a "Latin" country... (Eliot 1967ra:104) [Eliot's Italics]

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[36] Eliot is correct that Kant (1724-1804) lived in the nineteenth century, but to suggest that he is a philosopher of this century is anachronistic. It is like calling Queen Victoria (1819-1901) a twentieth-century monarch.

These "Teutonic roots and husks" were the European nations' putative Anglo-Saxon origins which Eliot found disagreeable. In the same article, he calls this theory of British racial origin the "absurd conclusion" and the "noxious...absurdity" of "...popular ethnology and popular philology" (Eliot 1967ra:104). Quite why Eliot found these theories so repulsive - an over-reaction, one might think, except for the benefit of journalistic bite - is hard to say because he never expanded them fully. Perhaps he harboured resentment for the German nation from the First World War, which saw his summer vacation and study tour of 1914 cut perilously short and which made his job at Lloyd's Bank a particularly difficult one (he was responsible for the reconciliation of pre-war German debts to the Bank). As early as 1911 his stance was broadly anti-German, as was witnessed in one of his marginal annotations of his copy Hegel's Lectures. By the side of Hegel's observation of "The time-honoured and cherished *sincerity of the German people*" (Hegel's Italics), Eliot wrote in bold capitals, "BULL" (Hegel 1991a:414). Clearly he had some grudge, which at least for the moment is unclear. However, it might have something to do with Eliot's lack of fluency in the language. Although he had a great mastery of French, composing poetry and prose in the language, his grasp of German, as argued above, was never strong.

Hegel's Protestantism was another possible objection for Eliot taking him as a source. He never found certain forms of Protestantism palatable. Eliot's history of invective against Protestantism is striking. In the essay "Baudelaire and our Time", published in For Lancelot Andrewes, for example, he comments that

> Symons [Baudelaire's translator, in this instance] appears a more childish child than Huysmans, merely because a

> childish Englishman - bred a Protestant - always appears more childish than a childish Frenchmen, bred a Roman. (Eliot 1970:73)

Protestantism is immature, probably because - in Eliot's view - it invested the individual, and not an objective authority, as its centre of reason. This led to the decay of society, as Eliot outlined in "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (Eliot 1970:99-112). Protestantism was a cultural dead-end and tended to decay quickly. The reason was simple: by rejecting the "...outer restraints of an orthodox religion", and supplanting it with "...the inner restraint of the individual over himself" (Eliot 1970:105) Protestantism descended into chaos. The end result was humanism, which Eliot decried as a "...by-product of Protestant theology in its last agonies" (Eliot 1970:104). This cultural problem Eliot expanded on in his 1934 book After Strange Gods:

> I trust that I shall not be taken to speaking in a spirit of bigotry when I assert that the chief clue to the understanding of most contemporary Anglo-Saxon literature is to be found in the decay of Protestantism...individual writers can be understood and classified according to the type of Protestantism which surrounded their infancy and the precise state of decay which it had reached. (Eliot 1934:38)

Eliot's target here was particularly Lawrence, whom Eliot saw as the corrupt product of dissenting chapel culture. Given these views, to Eliot, Hegel's stress on Protestantism freeing the Germanic World from the constrictions of medieval Catholicism was dubious and dangerous. Hegel had commented on the "...corruption of the [medieval] Church" (Hegel 1991a:412), the "externality" of which (in its laws and authority) had "become evil", developing itself "...as a negative principle in its own bosom" (Hegel 1991a:413), and demanding "slavery" to its own authority. This

enslavement prevented the growth of *Geist*, which was towards freedom. These kinds of views, virtually in complete contradiction to Eliot's, were to the poet "...monstrous" (Eliot (1967e:2).

Not only was it horrible, but it was also a corrupting influence. In his essay "The Perfect Critic", collected in the 1920 volume The Sacred Wood, Eliot indulges in invective against Hegel. This is perhaps surprising: the essay is ostensibly about literary criticism, and indeed begins by observations on Coleridge and Arnold. Either Eliot's conception of literary criticism is very broad, being based in pure philosophy (a debatable point, especially in his critical opinions circa 1920), or he is prepared at any length to distance himself from Hegel. This latter point will be argued below. In "The Perfect Critic", Eliot charts the development of criticism in Western culture. Hegel's contribution was negative:

> Finally Hegel arrived...he was certainly the most prodigious exponent of emotional systemisation, dealing with his emotions as if they were definite objects which had aroused these emotions...[his] corruption has spread very far. (Eliot 1928b:8-9)

Some six years later, in The Clark Lectures, Eliot was to repeat this charge:

> ...the philosophies of the nineteenth century, whether of Kant, or Fichte, or Hegel, of Schopenhauer, or James, or Bradley or Russell, are corrupted by feeling...
> (Eliot 1996:221-222)[37]

It was the emotional content that was so damaging. Eliot always tended to see the emotions as something chaotic and destructive. In a letter to Sydney Schiff of 30th November 1920, for example, he castigated Middleton Murry's literary criticism as

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[37] Eliot is again anachronistic in terming Russell's thought nineteenth-century.

being "...dictated by emotion" (Eliot 1988:422). In East Coker, Eliot spoke against

> ...the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
> Undisciplined squads of emotion... (Eliot 1969:182)

Eliot's "objective correlative" might also be seen as an attempt to by-pass the beguiling emotions as well. Emotions denied the power of the mind, trammelling it into unproductive, romantic episodes. Eliot tended to be suspicious of the emotions, and in The Clark Lectures he warned his audience against the excesses of emotion by conjuring up the spectre of Marcel Proust: "...try to imagine a society in which everyone was...a Marcel Proust" (Eliot 1996:221). This was, to Eliot, self-evidently unacceptable, and to his mind the cause of this excess of emotionalism was Hegel. Presumably, Eliot had in mind such works of Hegel's as The Phenomenology. To suggest that Hegel's work had the emotions at its heart, however, is an unusual view: Hegel, in his "Preface" to the Phenomenology, makes aspersions against the "...ordinary common sense" view of the world since it "...makes [its] appeal to feeling" (Hegel 1977:43). It was Hegel's wish to replace this false view with "...a scientific system of...truth" (Hegel 1977:3). That Eliot so obviously misreads Hegel perhaps suggests that his comments have a certain amount of hyperbole, meant to make his readers take note. However, despite this bias it still appears that Eliot was as far away from Hegel's scheme of thought as was possible. Even as late as 1952, in the preface to Joseph Pieper's Leisure the Basis of Culture, Eliot was still criticising Hegel:

> ...the colossal and grotesque achievement of Hegel may continue in concealed or derivative forms to exercise a fascination upon many minds. (Eliot 1952:17)

Perhaps here Eliot had in view the political followers of Hegel. Hegel had in his

Lectures seemingly approved the revolutionary zeal of the French. 1789 had accomplished at once what the Reformation had achieved over decades in Hegel's German nations. Lacking the Reformation's "Spirit of Freedom..." (Hegel 1991a:417), the French nation in its political condition was nothing but "...a confused mass of privileges altogether contravening Thought and Reason" (Hegel 1991a:446). The lack of freedom - towards which *Geist* always worked - "...began to agitate men's minds", and to the citizenry of France "...the entire political system appeared one mass of injustice" (Hegel 1991a:446) There was no alternative than a complete change in the nation's political life. This process was "...necessarily violent" (Hegel 1991a:446) and the "...idea of Right asserted its authority all at once" (Hegel 1991a:447). This was "...a glorious mental dawn" (Hegel 1991a:447) which "...thrilled through the world, as if the reconciliation between the Divine and the Secular was now first accomplished" (Hegel 1991a:447). To Eliot's mind, deeply imbued with the idea of tradition and history, this sweeping away of a nation's culture and political inheritance was not acceptable. This was evidenced in the "Preface" to the 1927 For Lancelot Andrewes, where Eliot described himself as "...classicist in literature, royalist in politics and anglo-catholic [sic] in religion" (Eliot 1970:7)[38]. All these three stand-points were anti-revolutionary. Moreover, Eliot's critique of Hegel's

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[38] Eliot's use of lower-case in "anglo-catholic" is, I believe, unique. The normal usage is "Anglo-Catholic" (and indeed many scholars, when quoting this passage, render Eliot's words thus). It cannot be argued that this was a printing error, for all editions of For Lancelot Andrewes carry this typography. The use of lower-case where upper would normally appear was of course a signature of Modernist writers, and perhaps Eliot was showing that despite his asseverations to the contrary, something of the Modernist remained in him post-conversion. He was playing 'possum once again.

politics does not end only in historical events. In the July 1929 The Criterion, which summarised the preceding articles about the literatures of Fascism and Communism by Barnes and Rowse respectively, Eliot ascribes the "...materialist theory of history" as "iss[uing] directly from the brain of Hegel" (Eliot 1967pp:684). He was the spiritual father of Marx, and therefore of Communism. Communism was to Eliot the great foe of Western Civilisation. It mixed the heady ingredients of "...science with feeling" (yet another reason for Eliot to dislike it), and threatened to replace Christianity as the European creed. The Communist was a dangerous individual, according to Eliot, because (here quoting Penty), he was "...a man of principle" (Eliot 1967vvv:276). He had powerful ideas - "fundamental ideas" (Eliot 1967rrr:64-66) which could fall into men's minds to replace the vague platitudes of corrupt liberalism. Hegel had unleashed the ideas which led to Communism, and Eliot was naturally against both ideas and the man.[39]

In the face of such hostility to Hegel, the thesis here under consideration might well appear to be a futile venture, especially as it wishes to show that some of Eliot's work itself was part of this "concealed or derivative" Hegelianism. There are a number of factors, however, which militate against the foregoing arguments against Eliot's Idealism and dislike of Hegel and Hegelianism. Although Eliot - with the exception of Bradley and his style - never acknowledged the debts of Idealist philosophers over his work (the nearest he gets to this is the "some" Hegel he had read but had "forgotten"), this should not be taken as being proof that they had no

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[39] See, for example, Marx's Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, an example of how far Hegel's political system was the foundation of Marx's.

influence. Eliot rarely acknowledged anyone's influence over his work, and indeed there is perhaps no reason why he should. In the search for the influences over his political and social thought, we might take a cue from the critics of Eliot's literary oeuvre. The search for sources here is a very rich seam of investigation. As even a quick perusal of Ricks' footnotes to Eliot's early poetry as contained in Inventions of the March Hare (Eliot 1997:64-66) will show, there are a myriad of literary echoes to be found in Eliot's work. Take, for example, the notes to the 1910 poem, "The First Debate Between Body and Soul". Ricks identifies echoes from Aristotle, Donne, Marvell, Dante, Laforgue, Milton, Hawthorne, Shelley, Keats, de Gourmont, Cavalcanti, Flaubert, Bertrand, Shakespeare, Byron, James, Rogers, Bradley, Symons, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Marston, Verhaeren and Coleridge (Eliot 1997:228-237), and this is for a poem of only fifty lines. According to Ricks, the range of literary influences on Eliot's poetry is enormous. Unless we take Ricks' textual notes as an excuse to parade his own scholarship - which would be most unfair - Ricks' work must be taken seriously. As Moody has suggested, Eliot was foremost a poet (Moody 1994a:19), and I believe that in searching for influences over his prose works we should take the cue from critics of his poetry, who are willing to hear an extraordinarily wide range of voices mixed in Eliot's. There are other examples of Eliot's unwillingness (or inability, if he suffered from some form of "reading amnesia" which Bowker suggests afflicted Lawrence Durrell [Bowker 1998:392][40]) to reveal his sources. The 1964 Knowledge and Experience shows a

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[40] Bowker calls this, erroneously, "cryptamnesia".

mere fifty references and foot-notes to Eliot's original thesis, and this is an academic work which should show the highest level of quantifiable research. Some of Eliot's famous phrases are also borrowed without acknowledgement. The "objective correlative" of the 1919 "Hamlet and his Problems", according to Frank Kermode, was a phrase Eliot had picked up from Santayana (Kermode 1967:236)[41]. It might even be the case that Eliot does not recognise these influences himself, forgetting the specific provenance of what he had read but remembering deep in his creative psyche lines of poetry and schemes of thought which emerge from time to time in his own works.

Such a phenomenon may be seen in his frequent mis-quotation of lines in The Clark Lectures. For example, he quotes the following lines from Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark":

> ...from necessity, not from good will,
> Marched along shoulder to shoulder. (Eliot 1996:52)

Whereas the lines actually run,

> Till (merely from nervousness, not from good will),
> They marched along shoulder to shoulder. (Eliot 1996:52:fn 19)

In the same lecture, Shakespeare is also misquoted. Eliot misquotes from King Lear:

> Man must abide
> His going hence, even as his coming hither;
> Ripeness is all. (Eliot 1996:53)

which should actually run

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[41] The actual phrase was "object correlative". Eliot, in a 1955 letter to Chatterji, said that although he thought he had coined the phrase he now believed that it came from Washington Allington.

> Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither.
> Ripeness is all. (Eliot 1996:53:fn 21)

These mis-quotations show two things. First, that Eliot's memory had the capacity to hold an enormous amount of literary "hard copy", and second that it could not always place its recall properly. If Eliot had this capacity to store poetry, why not prose also? This was demonstrated above, with Machiavelli. Eliot's mind, it seems, hardly forgot anything he ever read, despite his claim to the contrary over Fichte and Hegel. Moreover, as the work of Ricks shows, Eliot at least in his literary output does not pause to acknowledge the echoes and phrases and schemes of other writers in his own work. Such a labour would have taken an inordinate amount of time, and required footnotes so extensive as to make his works unpublishable. Such a practice would have been eccentric in any case. But again, if Eliot's poetry is like this (except for the notorious "notes" to “The Waste Land”), then why not his prose? As Eliot himself suggested,

> Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better. (Eliot 1928a:105)

Perhaps in his prose works, the same criteria applied, and Eliot the thief knew how to cover his tracks (most of the time) in his poetry and his prose. Dante, after all, had shown the way, for he "...knew how to pillage right and left" (Eliot 1928a:52).

Eliot was also inconsistent with his judgement of various authors, in the way that he was capable of praising in one place an author he had previously stigmatised. This was not a process of re-evaluation, as with Milton. It was more a case of Eliot holding mutually exclusive views at the same time. A good example of this is Proust.

While Eliot could summon him as a spectre in The Clark Lectures, as seen above, to show his audience what a monster was the writer who dwelt upon the emotions, he could, as editor of The Criterion, despite all its classicist leanings, harry the Frenchman for a contribution to its pages. He also asked Jacques Riviere and Sydney Schiff to persuade Proust to contribute. Eliot's creative mind was simply larger than any programme for which he might try to put it to work. Proust was more than willing to submit a piece of his newly published A La Recherche de Temps Perdu, but ill-health prevented him. In July 1922, shortly before his death, Proust wrote to Schiff that "I am in deep despair at not having yet written to Mr Eliot" (Ali 1986:7)[42]. Proust's "Death of Albertine" was to appear in The Criterion in October 1923, translated by Scott-Moncrieff. Many years later, in the "Preface" to the collected The Criterion, Eliot was to declare himself "...proud to introduce English readers to the work of Marcel Proust" (Eliot 1967a:v).

Another writer around whom Eliot held contradictory views was Lawrence. In After Strange Gods, Eliot had derided Lawrence as a heretic in literature, a product of decayed Protestantism. He was immoral and a danger to Western Civilisation. Yet Eliot was willing to stand as a witness for the defence in the obscenity trial over Lawrence's Lady Chatterly's Lover (he was never called), and in the collected The Criterion Lawrence's name is ranked alongside Proust's as those Eliot called himself proud to have published (Eliot 1967a:v). Murry was another author who occupied contradictory places in Eliot's mind, but we will discuss this later on. Overall, Eliot's

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[42] Proust was to die in November 1922, in bed.

sometimes forthright condemnations of authors did not reveal his full or true beliefs about that person or his works, and cannot be taken as incontrovertible. If Proust and Lawrence can be said to occupy such a position, both of whom were bogeymen for Eliot in some of his works, might not the corrupt and grotesque Hegel also?

There is one person to whom Eliot does acknowledge a debt of influence over his own works, and that (tellingly, for the purposes of our study) is Bradley. It is worth looking at Eliot on Bradley in some depth. Eliot wrote two studies on Bradley other than his doctoral thesis, one an obituary notice in The Criterion and the other a eulogy on Bradley's style Bradley's Ethical Studies and published in The Times Literary Supplement of 29th December 1927 and then in the 1928 in For Lancelot Andrewes. In the short notice of October 1924 (Eliot 1967e:1-2), Bradley is praised. Eliot muses that although Bradley did not achieve "kingdoms of this world which have been conveyed to H G Wells and Bernard Shaw", his name is among a handful of writers which "...carry the most promise of future power." This is a revealing statement: it suggests that Idealist philosophy, to Eliot's mind, has not run its course. It is still relevant, even in the era of "...the latest scientific novelty" (Eliot 1967e:1). Eliot proceeds to praise Bradley for "...restor[ing] the rank of Britain amongst philosophers". His philosophy is indigenous, being "English", and was saved from the "...emotional ubiquities which render German metaphysics monstrous" (Eliot 1967e:1-2). This is another critique of Hegel, and Eliot is at pains to point out that Bradley's debt to the German is "apparent" only. The true essence of Bradley is "...the light of medieval schoolmen" (Eliot 1967e:1). Their tradition was of course Latin, and European, rather than German, the significance of which has been noted above.

Eliot seems to go to some length to paint Bradley as some kind of native genius unsullied by rough Teutonism, imbibing instead the pure waters of medieval philosophy through some kind of osmosis in the precincts of Oxford, or as Eliot says in his article, "Who shall say that [Bradley's scholarship] does not draw some of its virtue from the genius of the place with which it is associated?" (Eliot 1967e:2). Eliot's Bradley appears like Eliot's Blake, a native genius, except that Blake's supposed limitations (he was not part of the European Tradition) were not Bradley's (Eliot 1928a:128-134).

Bradley's claim to greatness was two-fold. First, there was his graceful prose, which according to Eliot was "...the finest philosophic style in our language, in which acute intellect and passionate feeling preserve a classic balance" (Eliot 1967e:2). Eliot attempted to model his own prose style on Bradley, and many years later delighted to let the world know that it was a successful imitation, according to the 1964 Knowledge and Experience. Second, Bradley's greatness was simply the content of his message, that is, his Absolute Idealist philosophy. His was a power to change lives. Those who "...surrendered patient years to the understanding of his meaning" (1967e:2) were greatly rewarded: on them

> ...his writings perform that mysterious and complete operation which transmutes not one department of thought only, but the whole intellectual and emotional tone of their being. (Eliot 1967e:2)

Eliot was doubtless one of these, for he had devoted many years to studying Bradley. He was, by his own admission, forever changed by it. And this is a powerful counter-argument to the main objections to the thesis as outlined in this present chapter. In the very midst of the period in which he appears to jettison his

philosophical credentials, on the death of Bradley he declares himself still his pupil.

In the longer essay on Bradley, Eliot expands the outline of Bradley's greatness that The Criterion obituary notice contained, or at least the part which dealt with Bradley's literary style. After considering that Bradley's genius "...was the singular one of thinking rather than the common one of writing books" (Eliot 1967e:2) - in that Bradley purportedly published very little and that sporadically - Eliot suggests that Bradley's writings do not form nor contrive to form a "system". Eliot assiduously collects Bradley's own disclaimers in supporting this hypothesis. Ethical Studies did not aim "...at the construction of a system of moral philosophy" (Eliot 1967e:2). Principles of Logic "...makes no claim to supply any systematic treatment of logic" (Eliot 1967e:2), and Appearance and Reality "...does [not] carry out the idea of a system" (Eliot 1967e:2). In the 1927 essay, he appears anxious to deny that Bradley's thought was in any way attempting a systematic approach to knowledge, ethics and logic. Eliot's Bradley (at least in 1927 form) appears to be an occasional writer of elegant though unconnected tracts, and then only when the need arose. Is this view tenable, and why did Eliot hold it? It might be considered that Eliot is attempting to protect Bradley from the stain of Hegelianism. Hegel was the architect of a very considerable "system", which in Eliot's day still "corrupted". Bradley, in Eliot's view, should not be seen as an Hegelian derivative attempting to forge a similar system in England.

This view of an "unsystematic" Bradley might be considered eccentric, another example of Eliot pushing a view to something near absurdity, as with Machiavelli. Bradley's work can surely not be seen as "occasional". His major

works occupy six substantial volumes (Ethical Studies, Principles of Logic, Appearance and Reality, Essays on Truth and Reality, and two volumes of Collected Essays) and Bradley published regularly throughout his long career. Moreover, Bradley was a great exponent of "system", which lay at the heart of his philosophical quest. In Essays on Truth and Reality, for example, Bradley states emphatically

> What I maintain is that in the case of facts of perception and memory the test which we do apply, and which we must apply, is that of system. (Bradley 1994:296)

This "system" is simply the whole content of connected knowledge, "...as wide and as consistent as may be" (Bradley 1994:296). Integral aspects of this system are "...coherence and comprehensiveness" (Bradley 1994:322). Modern critics of Bradley's work find this system easily enough. David Holdcroft, for example, in the 1998 Appearance versus Reality, uses the Bradleyan coherence-comprehensiveness "system" in examining the notion of "floating ideas" (Holdcroft 1998:171-172). It seems that Bradley had a system, and it lay at the heart of his philosophical enquiries. That Eliot chose to ignore this aspect arose from the desire to conserve Bradley for his English audience.

What, then, Eliot asks, are Bradley's claims to permanent importance? Three years after The Criterion's obituary notice, in which Eliot may have been a little unguarded for his own liking in his praise of the *contents* of Bradley's metaphysics, the lasting worth of Bradley was principally to be found in his *style*. Eliot changes his appreciation of Bradley from substance to form, although the two were very closely connected in Eliot's view, at least in 1927. This can be seen in his article

about Russell in the March 1919 edition of The Nation,

> It is impossible to give oneself over to a judgement of any philosopher based purely on his prose, in the narrower sense of the word "style", yet a great deal of light may often be thrown on a philosopher by holding his work up to the standards of literature. For literary standards help us to perceive just those moments when a writer is scrupulously and sincerely attending to his vision...For where that is, there will the style be; and where the style does not convince, the vision will be lacking.
> (Eliot 1919a:768)

Notably, the 1927 essay on Bradley was collected in For Lancelot Andrewes, which was subtitled Essays in Style and Order. Bradley has power and influence, Eliot reasons, by virtue of "...his great gift of style" (Eliot 1975:197)[43]. For Bradley's purposes it was "...a perfect style" (Eliot 1979:197). Notably, Bradley's "purposes" were for Eliot solely to "...demolish the Logic of Mill and the psychology of Bain" (Eliot 1975:199). This, surely, is a deliberate miss-reading of Bradley's *raison d'être*. But style is what chiefly concerns Eliot in 1927. Bradley's writings were akin to Matthew Arnold's. They were "...alike in their purple passages", and possessed a "....similarity of tone and tension and beat" (Eliot 1975:198). His was a battle against "...raw and provincial [writing]" (Eliot 1975:199), replacing it with something "...catholic, civilised and universal" (Eliot 1975:199). Bradley here appears like Lancelot Andrewes himself, whose possession of "...breadth of culture" put him "...on terms of equality with [his] Continental antagonists and enabled him to elevate [his] Church above the position of a local heretical sect"

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[43] This would appear to contradict the opening sentence of the 1919 quotation. We might reconcile the 1919 to the 1927 Eliot by suggesting a simple development of thought, especially as in 1919 Eliot had entered his "scientific" phase of criticism.

(Eliot 1970:14). Eliot wants Bradley to appear in a tradition of English writers, and this meant that he had to be free of the Hegelian and foreign (as in Teutonic) taint.

Why is there such a difference between Eliot's thoughts on Bradley in 1924 and 1927? It might be posited, as hinted above, that in 1924, on Bradley's death, Eliot was off his guard. The news of Bradley's death "...brought an intimate and private grief" (Eliot 1970:14). In this Eliot's true feelings came to the fore: he admits to being one who had "...surrender[ed] patient years to the understanding of [Bradley's] meaning", which "transmuted" one's whole being (Eliot 1970:14). His style was "consummate" also, but it is the contents of Bradley's work, not their form, which Eliot praises in 1924. By 1927 this focus had changed. It was a change which was perhaps tied in with his personal circumstances: it was the year that saw Eliot both baptised and confirmed as an Anglican and become a British subject. For Lancelot Andrewes can be seen as a kind of apology for this movement, in parts celebrating what was best in English culture. A consistent theme of this book was the application of a writer's skills to the pressing needs of the day, in a kind of wise pragmatism. Andrewes and Hooker did this in founding the English Church. John Bramhall achieved the same in Ireland. Machiavelli (although an eccentric choice for the book) did the same in Renaissance Italy. And Bradley fought against the "...insular and immature and cranky" (Eliot 1970:59) philosophy of Utilitarianism principally with his majestic irony. Like the other characters of For Lancelot Andrewes, Bradley's importance is strictly tied to a particular period and to a particular need.

Eliot, then, was keen to admit his debt to Bradley. In 1924 this was a debt both

to content and style; by 1927/8 it was merely style. Bradley was one of the "masters" guiding Eliot's hand, whose face is perhaps part of "a familiar compound ghost" of Little Gidding (Eliot 1969:193). It could be argued that Eliot was here admitting Hegelian influence, perhaps unwittingly. Despite Eliot's assertion that Bradley had only an "...apparent debt to Hegel" (Eliot 1967e:2), Bradley's debt was in fact far greater. His Ethical Studies, according to Wollheim, is "Hegelian in many of its ideas...[and] to an even greater extent Hegelian in its method" (Wollheim 1988:xv), and references to Hegel's works occur often in Appearance and Reality, where the German is appealed to as if he were an ultimate authority[44]. In The Principles of Logic Hegel also appears as teacher and guide, when Bradley makes the following observation on science:

> Science from the first is a process of idealisation; and experiment, Hegel has long ago told us, is an idealising instrument. (Bradley 1994:88)

Moreover, Hegel is nowhere more present than on the last page of Appearance and Reality, where Bradley admits his debt:

> I will end with something...perhaps more essentially the message of Hegel. Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and, the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real.
> (Bradley 1946:489)

To Eliot, who had spent so many "patient years" studying Bradley, Bradley's reliance upon Hegel's philosophy could not have been unknown. Although he was anxious to distance himself and Bradley from Hegel, in acknowledging his debt to Bradley, was

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[44] See, for example, the footnote on page 450 of Appearance and Reality.

he not also tacitly acknowledging his debt to Hegel?

7.3. Objection Three: The Scientific Mr Eliot

> ...art may be said to approach the condition of science
> "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (Eliot 1927:44)

Eliot, at least in the earlier part of the period under review, set himself to counter-balance what he saw as excessive emotionalism in art and literature by resorting to what might be described as a "scientific" criticism. He sought after the objective, factual, and external, rather than the subjective which he saw Hegelianism as representing. Some of Eliot's most celebrated work comes from this period, most notably "Hamlet and his Problems"[45] and "Tradition and the Individual Talent"[46]. In these works, he is perhaps under the influence of Russell and the new "doctrine" of science which he represented. Eliot had studied under Russell at Harvard and was beguiled by him. He took to studying Russell and Whitehead's Principia Mathematica, so much that Eliot's friend Blanshard

> ...recalls [Eliot's] sitting for hour after hour at the dining-table of their little [holiday] cottage with one of the volumes of this work propped up before him. (Sencourt 1971:49)

Eliot was struck by its formal beauty and was later to commend the Principia as one of Europe's great cultural achievements. Eliot attempted to carry this objective clarity

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[45] First published in The Athenaeum, 26th September 1919, number 4665, pp. 940-941.

[46] First published in The Egoist, VI:4, September 1919.

into his own critical work. In “Hamlet and his Problems”, for example, he searches for an objective basis on which to judge the play:

> *Qua* work of art, the work of art cannot be interpreted; there is nothing to interpret; we can only criticise according to standards, in comparison to other works of art; and for "interpretation" the chief task is the presentation of certain historical facts which the reader is not assumed to know. (Eliot 1927:82)

Facts are what the critic needs to give his reader so that the reader can make a more informed judgement. Otherwise, art is quite useless: it has no connection with the world. Not only does Eliot in this essay suggest a more objective task for the critic (more an historian than an interpreter of symbols), but he tellingly suggests that the failure of the play Hamlet is the way it mishandles emotion:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion, such that when the external facts...are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (Eliot 1927:85-86)

Eliot here appears to want to strip emotions of any potential ambiguity, and define and delineate them until their portrayal approaches something like scientific notation. Eliot insists that this is the "only way" of treating emotion in art.

The subject of the scientific basis for criticism is articulated in “Tradition and the Individual Talent”. Eliot argues for the necessity for the individual artist's personality to be subsumed into his or her inherited cultural tradition. This does not come naturally or easily, as in some Romantic inspiration, but has to be worked at with great toil with "...a great amount of erudition" (Eliot 1927:43). The personality of the artist, as the seat of the emotions, has to be brought under control and

eventually extirpated. It might be considered that Eliot is here attempting to make the artist into some form of laboratory scientist, whose personal involvement with the work in hand begins and ends at his finger-tips:

> The progress of the artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. (Eliot 1927:44)

It is in this "process of depersonalisation" according to Eliot that art "...may be said to approach the condition of science" (Eliot 1927:44). As such, it is almost as though Eliot suggests that in becoming more like a science art approaches *perfection.* As he wrote to Lewis about his work in The Criterion, "I am not an individual but an instrument, and anything I do is in the interests of literature and civilisation" (Ali 1986:37). Eliot further uses scientific terminology in an analogy for the mind of the artist. It is like a strip of platinum, acting as a catalyst in the creative process wherein his raw experience is turned into art. Eliot's catalytic process involves "...finely filiated platinum" being introduced to "...oxygen and sulphur dioxide" (Eliot 1927:44). These, Eliot asserts, will form sulphurous acid, leaving the platinum untouched. It is significant that Eliot gets his chemistry wrong. Oxygen (O_2) and sulphur dioxide ($_2SO_3$) will produce only $_2SO_3$, which only in the presence of water will give H_2SO_4, sulphuric acid, according to the review of the 1932 edition of Eliot's Selected Essays (Anon 1967:167). This anonymous review may well have been by Eliot himself, which would add a rich irony. Even if it were not by Eliot, it would have crossed his editorial desk and (presumably) met his approval for publication. The reviewer spends his entire piece on the chemical error, and concludes:

> Whether the theory of poetic creation which Mr Eliot

> supports by this celebrated metaphor remains valid, is more difficult to decide. (Anon 1967:167)

Presumably there was a doubt that it did: perhaps this doubt had larger ramifications, that Eliot's entire "scientific" phase was bogus.

Not only were his essays ground for Eliot's new scientific regime of thought. Eliot's quest after objectivity saw many other effusions. Perhaps most important is the publication of Eliot's The Criterion. Although the name was suggested by Vivien, being the name of a restaurant which she used to frequent (Ali 1986:4), it also expressed a definite, quantifiable standard. Ali suggests that the standard

> ...was to try to make Classicism the spirit of the age, to have a base from which the individualist, irrational impulses associated with Romanticism could be challenged and rejected. (Eliot in Ali 1986:10)

The Criterion, according to Eliot,

> ...aims at the examination of first principles in criticism, at the valuation, and re-evaluation of old works of literature according to principles, and the illustration of these principles in creative writing...It aims at the assertion of order and discipline in literary tastes. (Ali 1986:21-22)[47]

Eliot wanted these standards to be universal, just like the scientific systems of classification. Writing to Ford, on the foundation of The Transatlantic Review, Eliot congratulated his magazine for being the sister publication of The Criterion -

> ...I have always maintained what appears to be one of your capital tenets: that the standards of literature should be international. (Eliot in Ali 1986:29)

The Criterion, in its job of promoting these universal standards, sought contributors

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[47] This description is from a flyer inserted into the July 1923 issue.

whose work would (in Eliot's words) further "...the formation of a design and the execution of a purpose" (Ali 1986:31)[48]. Its job was to be a kind of literary The Lancet. It seemed that Eliot was far from the concerns of Absolute Idealist philosophy with which he had occupied himself until 1916. As Bowker suggests, Eliot in his work encapsulated the current thinking in scientific circles:

> Einstein's theory [of relativity] had relativized not only [the] view of the material world but also the view of the human personality...Joyce, Proust and Eliot, whose work proceeds through spiralling and counter-spiralling motion, represents the new [way of thought]. (Bowker 1998:191)

Eliot's apparent attachment to things scientific can however be seen to be both temporary and illusory, at least in part. His lack of understanding of the chemical process, which played so prominent a role in "Tradition and the Individual Talent", has already been highlighted. But his unscientific way of thinking runs much deeper than mere miscalculation. A careful perusal of The Criterion shows that despite Eliot's desire for a new-found "objectivity" in literature, his mind in reality was still set against this precision. It took four issues before Eliot offered to his readers any definition of what The Criterion was about, and then its "criterion" was defined as little more than "...the application, in literature, of principles which have their consequences also in politics and in private conduct" (Eliot 1967ai:421). These "principles" were never precisely defined; it was as though Eliot could not force himself to limit his scope as editor by such formulas, despite his apparent wish to do so. The Criterion's criteria, like the asseveration in the Preface to For Lancelot

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[48] This is from a flyer to the October 1923 issue.

Andrewes, were really an illusion[49]. That Eliot's "scientific" period was little more than a passing fad can be seen in an examination of the unfortunate Bertrand Russell. Russell was the point at which Eliot's antagonism towards the scientific method often emerged. Arguing against Russell's article in the March 1923 edition of The Dial, Eliot states:

> One is immediately struck by the arrogance of the scientist. (Eliot 1967b:233)

This might be brushed aside as a piece of personal vendetta against Russell[50]. However, Eliot broadens the scope of the criticism in a very important way:

> The man of letters or the man of "culture" of the present time is far too easily impressed and overawed by scientific knowledge...the claims of the scientists are fortified by the cowardice of the men of letters. (Eliot 1967b:233)

It does not seem possible that the author of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" could possibly be the same who here accuses his fellow "men of letters" of quailing before scientific method. Perhaps there is an element of self-criticism here, of his 1919 piece. Eliot at least appears contradictory. Such a stand against the claims of science is not isolated to 1923. In the October 1924 The Criterion, Eliot in his obituary note for Bradley bewails the fact that contemporaries will simply note the fact of his death "...and will hurry on to the discussion of the latest scientific

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[49] In this preface, on p. 7, Eliot stated that he was "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic [sic] in religion." He immediately deflated these claims by writing: "I am quite aware that the first term is completely vague, and easily lends itself to clap-trap; I am aware that the second term is at present without definition...[and] the third term does not rest with me to define." It is remarkable how many Eliot scholars do not consider these caveats.

[50] The cause of this may have been Russell's 1917 affair with Vivien Eliot.

novelty" (Eliot 1967e:1). In Eliot's thought, there now appears a dichotomy between art and science, whereas for a brief time the two had to be combined. The same Commentary in The Criterion also contained an attack on the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Although Eliot suggests that

> ...there never was a time more dangerous than now for the humble man of letters to paddle in the tides of science.
> (Eliot 1967e:3)

(another instance of the arts-versus-science shift in Eliot's mind), he feels called to warn his audience against "making use of scientific generalisations". Here is another instance of "to criticise the critic", and this piece of advice Eliot could use against himself. Importantly, Eliot sees the coming danger of applying scientific ideas to civilisation. Writing against Gamble's paper “Construction and Control in Animal Life”, Eliot sees the application of zoology to human affairs as "...hardly a prospect to be desired" (Eliot 1967e:3). Eliot begins to associate scientific thinking with the mechanisation of civilisation and the destruction of the environment, which in The Idea of a Christian Society is prominent (Eliot 1982:80-81). By 1926, Eliot's anti-scientific mind-set has become permanent. Science should be kept in its proper place, and not spill over to the concerns of art and civilisation. Again Russell is the flash-point for Eliot, in a notice on Russell's What I Believe: "...when he trespasses outside of mathematical philosophy his excursions are often descents" (Eliot 1967j:6).

Eliot’s putative rejection of Absolute Idealism - summed up, perhaps, in “The Waste Land”’s lines

> On Margate sands
> I can connect

Nothing with nothing (Eliot 1969:70)

- and his apparent adoption of objective, almost scientific criteria for literary criticism, can I feel be seen to be temporary. It can be argued that by the launch of The Criterion in 1922 this phase in Eliot's development had already passed. In the "Notes" appended to the first volume of The Criterion, in July 1923, Margate sands' "unconnectedness" seems to have vanished. In defining the nature of a literary review, Eliot suggests that

> A literary review should maintain the application, in literature, of principles which have their consequences also in politics and in private conduct. (Eliot 1967ai:421)

Essentially, these principles enjoy a particular relationship. Eliot wished to view "...every human activity, and to perceive it in relation with every other" (Eliot 1967ai :421). Every human endeavour was therefore connected - in a very real sense, "...all truths are connected" (Bradley 1946:46). In setting his new journal to make these connections, Eliot in a sense was fleshing out a central concern of Absolute Idealist philosophy.

Chapter Eight: The Contemporary Eliot

8.1. An introduction

> ...the classical English treatises on Church and State...do not give me the assistance that I need. (Eliot 1982:46)

The fourth objection to our thesis, which is perhaps the most powerful and certainly the most pertinent to our enquiry, is that the influences Eliot himself cites for The Idea of a Christian Society are his contemporaries. In the "Preface" to its published form, Eliot denies that his ideas are original. He writes,

> To aim at originality would be an impertinence: at most, this essay can be only an original arrangement of ideas which did not belong to me before and which must become the property of whoever can use them. (Eliot 1982:41)

One is reminded perhaps of Eliot's dictum on the writers of verse, that "mature poets steal". The victims of Eliot's theft are - according to the "Preface" - two distinct groups. First, there are "...certain friends whose minds are engrossed" (Eliot 1982:41) with the problems that Eliot confronted in his work, and with whom Eliot has discussed the matters in hand, and who are not named. Second, there are what Eliot calls "recent books", and these are listed. In what order, if any, this list is put is not revealed. To these works Eliot admits that he "...owe(s) a great deal" (Eliot 1982:41). There is Dawson's Beyond Politics; Murray's The Price of Leadership; "...the writings of the Rev. V. A. Demant", which are not specified in the "Preface" (although they are later on - see the following) except for his Religious Prospect [of Mankind] which was published after Eliot wrote The Idea of a Christian Society; and "...the

works of Jacques Maritain, especially his Humanisme intègral" (Eliot 1982:42) To these two groups, for purposes of our study, must be added the works cited by Eliot either in the text or in the footnotes. These are more numerous than those admitted to in the text, and they are:

- a work by A J Penty, not specified (p. 60)

- Coleridge's Church and State (p. 83). Eliot does not give the full title here.

- a work or works by R H Tawney, cited as an example of the "...several Christian economists and sociologists" whose work had influenced Eliot (p.83).

- Demant's Christian Polity (p. 83).

- Hauer's "essay" in the volume Germany's New Religion (p. 86). Eliot omits to mention that Hauer wrote two essays in this volume.

- de Rougemont, L'Amour et l'occident (p. 87).

- Henson's Cui Bono? and Disestablishment (p. 92).

- Austin, Moral Re-Armament (p. 95). Eliot mis-cites the title here.

- H Beevor, Peace and Pacifism (p. 97).

I propose to discuss the major works in each category (to examine all of them would, alas, make this project unmanageable), and attempt to portray what influence each had on The Idea of a Christian Society. These must be dealt with in some detail as it was Eliot's clear wish for his readers to see his 1939 work as inspired by his contemporaries. I propose only to deal with written sources, as attempting to see what influence Eliot's interlocutors had over him would be a near impossible task.

However, before we begin, we must explore the possible reasons why Eliot was so inaccurate in his citing of the titles of other works in The Idea of a Christian

Society. As we saw above, this was a habit that can be demonstrated at various periods in Eliot's career. First in the list of reasons is that Eliot was quoting titles from memory as he prepared his manuscript for publication. Perhaps the original manuscript, a set of lecture notes, would not have contained such information. This might well explain away such omissions as the retitling Austin's Moral Rearmament: the Battle for Peace as simply Moral Re-Armament. Eliot the school-teacher perhaps wanted to correct Austin's putative error, also. If Eliot was simply misquoting from memory, it is a blight upon his skills as both editor and author. Second, and more seriously for our study, Eliot wanted to somehow cover his tracks. His omission to say that Hauer's work was read in translation - although by the fact that Eliot gives it its English title it might be reasonably assumed it *was* a translation - perhaps shows Eliot wishing to hide his lack of skill in German. This point was discussed above vis-à-vis Hegel. Here we may have Eliot the not-so-scholarly scholar covering deficiencies. An even more interesting omission involves the work of Coleridge. Eliot had misquoted titles of works before - for example, giving Bramhall's A Just Vindication of the Church of England from the Unjust Aspersion of Criminal Schism as simply Just Vindication of the English Church (Eliot 1970:36). Thus the misquoting Coleridge's On the Constitution of the Church and State according the Idea of each as simply Church and State had a long pedigree. This was not perhaps simply a dysfunction of memory, however. It might well have been a deliberate concealment. Eliot's re-naming Bramhall's A Just Vindication of the Church of England from the Unjust Aspersion of Criminal Schism as Just Vindication of the English Church (a title which does not make particularly clear sense) revealed a

hidden purpose in For Lancelot Andrewes: it was part of Eliot's *own* attempt at vindicating the Church to which he had submitted in baptism. Bramhall's work becomes Eliot's work, and it is transmuted in the process. It was part of a living tradition and this was what living artists did with tradition, according to "Tradition and the Individual Talent". Moreover, Eliot changes Bramhall's "Church of England" to "English Church". This was significant, as it reflected Eliot's Anglocentricity and his desire to become thoroughly English. Eliot's own concerns, it might be seen, transformed his material into his own image. With Coleridge, this might also be seen. Coleridge's influence on The Idea of a Christian Society will be discussed shortly, but here we must pause and ask why Eliot misquotes its title. What he omits is of crucial importance. First, he leaves out "On the Constitution of..." Why this omission? It was surely not simply because it was too long for him to write down. Perhaps it was because Eliot did not wish to deal with constitutional issues in The Idea of a Christian Society - he had, after all, stated early on that "The subject of Church and State...is not my primary concern" (Eliot 1982:45) - and did not wish Coleridge's title to imply that this was some kind of weakness of Eliot's part. The Idea of a Christian Society might have paled in comparison with Coleridge's book and Eliot might have been careful to avoid this. Second, Eliot omits "...according to the Idea of each" from the title. This is an even more significant "oversight". Eliot uses the word "Idea" in his title; it is The Idea of a Christian Society, and this looks close if not identical to Coleridge's use of the word in his title. Moreover, it is not *an* idea, but *the* idea in each book. This is a specific use of the word. It does not mean "general plan" or "blue print", but rather a set of values which translate into actuality. Eliot attempts to define

this in The Idea of a Christian Society, and interestingly he uses the definition of "idea" which Coleridge used in On the Constitution of the Church and State according to the Idea of each, almost verbatim. This is not acknowledged in the actual text, but only as a footnote. Eliot has stolen again, and appears to wish to hide that theft. We must ask ourselves, why? It might appear to be a surprising concealment, as Eliot may have wished to link his views with those of Coleridge, if only to borrow some glory. It would also have placed Eliot in a rich tradition in English thought, alongside Newman's The Idea of a University. But Eliot instead distances himself and chooses - very uncharacteristically - to be aloof from tradition. The reason might be two-fold. First, Coleridge's views, often characterised as Broad Church, were perhaps antipathetic to Eliot's. Coleridge was not entirely orthodox on religious matters and perhaps the consciously ultra-orthodox Eliot did not want any Coleridgian contamination in his work. Second, and perhaps more importantly, Coleridge represented a strain of thought in nineteenth century letters that was heavily influenced by German Idealism. That Coleridge put so much emphasis upon the role of "the Idea" was symptomatic of this way of thought. Eliot, although doing exactly the same in The Idea of a Christian Society, did not want it to be that obvious, given the reasons as outlined above.

It might be put that Eliot's “Preface” and footnotes for The Idea of a Christian Society are in the mould of his other prefaces and footnotes. They are inaccurate and misleading, perhaps deliberately so. Eliot always seems to want to conceal himself. He makes it very difficult to know his sources. Those sources he does reveal are also partly concealed - “I am here/Or there, or elsewhere.” (Eliot 1969:178)

8.2. Christopher Dawson: Beyond Politics

Christopher Dawson was a lay Roman Catholic theologian whose Beyond Politics was published in January 1939 by Sheed and Ward, shortly before Eliot delivered the lectures which composed The Idea of a Christian Society. It was part of the soul-searching that provoked many works in the 1930's on the future of Christian Society, of which Eliot's is one of the last. The concerns of both Beyond Politics and The Idea of a Christian Society are similar. Dawson saw that the important issue of the late 1930's

> ...was a change in the whole social structure of the modern world, which affects religion and culture as well as politics and economics... (Dawson 1939:3)

This change in the basic structures of civilisation was observable in Britain, so that "we might expect to see the rise in democratic totalitarianism" (Dawson 1939:3). This concern The Idea of a Christian Society echoes to a great degree. According to Eliot, "...the real issue[s] of contemporary civilisation" (Eliot 1982:41) was the state of "...the substratum of collective temperament, ways of behaviour and unconscious values" (Eliot 1982:50) of Britain. For both Dawson and Eliot, it was by reviving this dormant life of the people that the threats of Fascism and Communism to Western Society could be overcome. For Dawson,

> ...the problem which confronts us today is how the democratic states are to make themselves strong enough to exist in the face of new powers... (Dawson 1939:11)

This was to be done, primarily, by the better organisation of society and its values:

> If Western civilisation is to be saved it is necessary to find

> some way of removing the divided aims...that [is] the weaknesses of democracy. (Dawson 1939:12)

According to Dawson, the reason for totalitarianism's successes was its ability to organise people and unite them in aim and purpose:

> It is through their realisation of that truth [of organising] that the dictators have earned their success...they have been aspired [sic] to change the spirit of a people...
> (Dawson 1939:12)

Eliot's concerns are virtually the same. He wrote, "In times of emergency"

> ...it may prove in the long run that the problems we have postponed or ignored [i.e. those of contemporary civilisation]...will return to plague us. (Eliot 1982:42)

Against the threat of the totalitarian regimes,

> We [i.e. the Western democracies] could not match conviction with conviction, we had no idea with which we could either meet or oppose the ideas opposed to us.
> (Eliot 1982:82)

Eliot sought in The Idea of a Christian Society not to revive the existing flagging political system, but something more:

> What we are seeking is not a programme for a party, but a way of life for a people... (Eliot 1982:51)

For Eliot, Fascism and Communism were ideas and belief systems, which unified their followers in a way which democracy could not. He shared with Dawson a desire to see the free nations become as vigorous in their cultural life as Germany and Russia, or else they would fall into the same state. A lack of principles, either political, cultural or religious, Eliot saw as disastrous. For in a vacuum of principle, such as Britain in 1939, a man of principle - whatever it was - would gather adherents. And a Communist was definitely a man of principle, according to Eliot; it

was his main strength (Eliot 1967ppp:276). As he wrote in The Criterion of July 1933,

> Communism...has come as a godsend (so to speak) to those young people who would like to grow up and believe in something. (Eliot 1967nnn:472)

Both authors see the problem as bigger than that of mere politics. For Dawson,

> ...if it is dangerous to attempt the fundamental reorganisation of economic life by purely political means, it is far more dangerous to bring politics into the order of culture, for this means the invasion of the human soul by the hand of power. (Dawson 1939:18)

Eliot had a similar lack of faith in the power of politics and parties. These "...conceal from us the real issues of contemporary civilisation" (Eliot 1982:41), and can only deliver fudged agreements like Chamberlain's in September 1938. Politics only dealt with superficial problems, as its tendency was "...towards expediency which may become cynical manipulation" (Dawson 1939:56-57). For both Eliot and Dawson what was needed was a fundamental reorganisation of the cultural life of Britain which cut deeper than politics. Dawson saw that

> ...the coming of the totalitarian regimes has put an end to [the] rule of *laissez faire* [in culture]...They have shown that a nation which organises the whole of its social life gains an immense access of strength...We must create a new institution...for the organisation of national culture... (Dawson 1939:56-57)

Eliot also wished for a fundamental shift in the organisation of British life. "The Christian", he wrote,

> ...can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organisation of society... (Eliot 1982:62)

This "Christian community" is homogeneous. There "...is a unified religious-social

code of behaviour", and "...social customs would take on religious sanctions" which would "...make for social tenacity and coherence" (Eliot 1982:62). Such organisation in society was necessary to combat what both authors saw as the problems of contemporary culture which was driven by mass movements such as the radio and the cinema. For Dawson

> ...there is the...fundamental...problem of how the individual…is to resist the pressure of mass emotion...the average man and woman...their minds are moulded and their opinions formed insensibly by the mass suggestion and propaganda of the press, radio and cinema.
> (Dawson 1939:77)

Against these mass movements of communication and propaganda, Western Christianity is effete, according to Dawson:

> [Christianity's] ideological influence is weak, even where its moral influence is still active. And this provides the new socio-economic ideologies both with an opportunity and a justification...the greatest danger that threatens modern civilisation is its degeneration into the hedonistic mass civilisation of the cinema, picture paper and dance hall, where the individual, family and nation dissolve into a human herd without personality, tradition or beliefs. (Dawson 1939:78-79)

Eliot is synoptic in his view, and in a passage bewailing the fall of society from its former Christian state, he even uses some of the phrases from Dawson, suggesting that the latter's influence over The Idea of a Christian Society is indeed strong. "The more highly industrialised the country", wrote Eliot,

> the more easily a materialistic philosophy will flourish in it, and the more deadly that philosophy will be...And the tendency of unlimited industrialisation is to create bodies of men and women - of all classes - detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion... (Eliot 1982:53)

That Eliot follows Dawson's text closely at this point may be seen in the following points. He uses the phrase "men and women", where he would usually employ the word "men". "Mass suggestion" also appealed to Eliot, perhaps because of its quasi-sociological tone. Another word borrowed from Dawson was "tradition", although as this was a familiar term and concept in the Eliot canon perhaps its use is not unusual here.

Against this monster of mass culture[51], both Eliot and Dawson suggest that organisations are needed in order to withstand the cultural forces of totalitarianism. For both writers, these organisations had to be independent in order to be truly effective. "It is still possible", wrote Dawson,

> to create an organisation of national culture which would not be dependent on the State... (Dawson 1939:27-28)

Eliot concurred. He desired a body of people which would "...collectively form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation", and lead the cultural life of the Christian Society of the land (Eliot 1982:68). This group would be drawn from all walks of life and not be connected - in view of their cultural work, at least - to any particular institution. Despite this desire for some kind of group of like-minded people to lead the nation's cultural life, Eliot and Dawson's plans are different in their suggested form for these groups. Dawson wanted firm principles:

> If the English tradition is to survive...[w]e need a definite organisation which does not compete with that of political parties, but which is strong enough...to meet the

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[51] At this point we should note that Eliot's stance on popular culture was ambiguous - he had an affinity for the music-hall, for example. The recent work of the Chicago scholar David Chinitz explores this theme.

> competitive organisations and ideologies of communism and fascism... (Dawson 1939:54-55)

Dawson's vision is for some kind of institution like the British Council, independent and self-assured. Presumably it would be a voluntary organisation whose members (except for a salaried few to administrate) would work for no stipend, while holding other careers, although Dawson does not trouble his reader with such details.

Despite these grey areas, Dawson's cultural group is much firmer round the edges than Eliot's. The cultural guardians in The Idea of a Christian Society are much less obviously a group. For Eliot, the members of what he called "the Community of Christians"

> ...would include, besides many of the laity engaged in various occupations, many, but not all, of the clergy...The Community of Christians - a body of very nebulous outline - would contain both clergy and laity of superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts. (Eliot 1982:64-65)

Eliot's group would appear to be less cohesive than Dawson's. Dawson's group seems to be an institution, whilst Eliot's is more of a communion of like minds. It appears that Eliot had no vision of his Community of Christians ever coming together in one place, but instead its members are diffused throughout the land. In a sense, Eliot's vision of his Community of Christians is like his view of the Christian Society which it served - it is fundamentally parochial, in the sense it is locally based in ecclesiastical parishes, as we saw above.

Perhaps ironically, Dawson's more organised cultural institute has less well-defined membership criteria than Eliot's group. It is open to anyone who is not fascist or communist, and who "is loyal" to what Dawson calls "...national tradition and national institutions and ideals" (Dawson does not suggest what these are). Eliot

is on the other hand more exclusive, perhaps elitist, in his membership criteria. His "Community of Christians" is broad-based, including "...many of the laity engaged in various occupations" and "...many, but not all, of the clergy". This is Eliot's first membership criterion, although at first glance it may not seem like that at all, as the terms laity and clergy, when put together, are naturally all-inclusive. However, the laity in Eliot's Community are those who work - they are "engaged in various occupations". Moreover, the group might be seen to be very clericalised. The phrase that gives this impression is "many, but not all" of the clergy. The suggestion here, perhaps, is that *most* of the clergy would be members. This would fit with Eliot's planned basic structure of society, the ecclesiastical parish, which he described as "...the traditional unit of the Christian Community in England" (Eliot 1982:58). Naturally, one of the key members of these parishes would be the parish priest, who would indeed be one of the few people significantly tied to parish boundaries, apart from the Wardens of the parish church and the civil Parochial Council. Eliot, as Warden of St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, would surely have known this.

Although Eliot is keen to avoid matters of differing race and religion in The Idea of a Christian Society, nevertheless there is a current of religious and cultural monism in the 1939 work, albeit below the surface. Eliot, given his convictions, appears to want a unified and indeed uniform system of religious, ethical and social beliefs and practices in his society. That he calls it a *Christian* Society would naturally tend to exclude certain belief systems from its founding principles. Moreover, the members of the Community of Christians may be identified, according to Eliot, by their "identity of belief and aspiration" and their "background

of a common system of education and a common culture". It is significant that Eliot uses the singular in his description - it is *belief*, not *beliefs*, et cetera - implying uniformity of belief and experience. Eliot's society is monolithic. A practising Jew, Hindu, Muslim or Atheist could not by definition belong to this Community. Although Eliot is at pains to deny this - he says that "I cannot foresee a future society in which we could classify Christians and non-Christians simply by their professions of belief" (Eliot 1982:68) - his stance is nonetheless exclusively pro-Christian. He admits this in his putative denial of it - he says that there are *already* Christians and non-Christians in society, however one defines them. Eliot simply believes that Christianity is the best and perhaps only route for a society to follow. He certainly finds it hard to understand people who are not Christian, as can be seen in his tone of incredulity when commenting on those who are hostile to the faith:

> And *perhaps* there will always be individuals who...will remain blind, indifferent, or even hostile [to Christianity]...
> (Eliot 1982:68) [Italics added]

Although in 1939 the numbers of non-Christian citizens was not massive, it was significant and well-established. Eliot could not but have known about his fellow Britons who were Jewish, Hindu, Muslim or Atheist (Bertrand Russell is an obvious example of this group), and in his rationale of his society's educational and cultural and religious system, he actively excludes them from its most important group, the Community of Christians. Dawson, in contrast, makes no religious or cultural division. In composition, Eliot and Dawson's groups differ widely. Dawson wants a kind of patriotic league; Eliot wants a Christian intellectual elite.

There are other points on which Dawson and Eliot agree, and which Eliot may

well have followed his predecessor. Both authors see the necessity of examining the Christian past in order to understand what society's response should be to the crisis of the late 1930's. Dawson is quite clear in this aspect. He remarks,

> It is more instructional to turn back to Christian origins, for there in the Roman Empire...we find a parallel to the situation of the modern world. (Dawson 1939:87)

These parallels were, essentially, that of a materialist society which had "a source of vital degeneration" in its hedonism. Into this world erupted "the new light" of the Christian faith which re-invented society by way of its message of "otherness" and "forgiveness" (Dawson 1939:88). Dawson wishes a second infusion of the Christian spirit into the world of 1939:

> Can this miracle be repeated in a world that has for a second time grown old? Can the Word of Life once more enlighten the darkness of...civilisation? (Dawson 1939:90)

Eliot likewise saw the past as holding a key to the present. He locates his historical cynosure in roughly the same period as Dawson, that of "the Christian Fathers". Eliot's appeal to the Christian past is couched in much the same language as Dawson's. Dawson wants to "*turn back to Christian origins*", and Eliot writes

> We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it; and the purpose of *reascending to origins* is that we should be able to return, with greater spiritual knowledge, to our own situation.
> (Eliot 1982:81) [Italics added]

It might well be that Eliot took the language as well as the idea from Dawson, although possibly relocating his historical period and also its focus - the "Christian Fathers" perhaps constituted the first "Community of Christians". Certainly they were a group of men with outstanding intellectual and spiritual gifts. Dawson's

appeal, mirroring the criteria of his cultural movement in contemporary society, appears more democratic.

Another area on which Dawson and Eliot share common ground is that of anti-industrialisation. In condemning "...the growing inhumanity of our civilisation", Dawson observes

> We see it on a large scale in the way that the modern industrial system...reduces the countryside to desolation and involves the population in troughs of depression and scarcity. (Dawson 1939:5-6)

Eliot was also keen to see the evils of the industrial world. In "...an industrial society like that of England", he wrote, "I am surprised that the people retains as much Christianity as it does" (Eliot 1982:59). Industrialisation was part of the "mass culture" which stripped the populace from its traditions. It had to be confronted and questioned rigorously in a Christian Society. If we accept a Christian rationale for Britain, suggests Eliot, that

> ...must lead us inevitably to face such problems as the hypertrophy of the motive of Profit into the social ideal, the distinction between the *use* of natural resources and their exploitation…
> (Eliot 1982:61) [Eliot's Italics and capitalisation]

Although Eliot does not exactly demand the abolition of these practices, it is clear where his sentiments lie. Although it is an anachronism to call Eliot a writer on "green issues", he was certainly one of the first in Britain to give these issues a wider audience. A modern critic like Scott sees Eliot's critique of society from an environmental standpoint as one of The Idea of a Christian Society's most "memorable" achievements (Scott 1994:71). Dawson's lament on the "smoking desolation" of the countryside was in tune with Eliot's concerns and perhaps

Dawson's inclusion of them in Beyond Politics influenced Eliot in The Idea of a Christian Society.

Although agreeing in several key areas, Eliot and Dawson differ on some fundamental issues, notably democracy, and the role of the Church. Dawson is basically a democrat, both in politics and in culture. In the field of culture, he submits the following argument for adopting democratic principles:

> A democratic society must find a correspondingly democratic organisation of culture. (Dawson 1939:24)

This was to be done primarily by the creation of different cultural "parties" modelled on the Parliamentary system:

> In these circumstances it seems to me that the form of organisation...is the party - that is to say a voluntary organisation for common ends based on a common "ideology". (Dawson 1939:24)

Although Dawson does not expand on the composition of these party groups, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that, like their Parliamentary correlatives, they would be groups of individuals cohering around core beliefs. However, there would be plurality within each group and indeed plurality of groups. It would seem that each would be self-regulating. On what platform these groups would exist - as Parliament allows a stage for the political parties - Dawson does not divulge.

Politically, in Beyond Politics Dawson also seeks democratic solutions to contemporary problems, albeit in a form different from that of the 1930's. The main thrust of Dawson's arguments here are that the current political and social forces are creating a mass society, with "...the standardisation and mechanisation of culture and the supremacy of the mass over the individual" (Dawson 1939:48). One of the ways

by which this is happening is the "...destruction of social inequality" and "...the reduction of our culture to the lowest factor of intelligence" (Dawson 1939:47), through "...the wireless, cinema, motor transport [and] the popular press" (Dawson 1939:46). It was this inequality that gave England its characteristic richness. By its very inequalities the fundamental principles of what Dawson calls "...individual liberty and responsibility" (Dawson 1939:43) are safeguarded. Here, Dawson's arguments may seem quaint, and he appears to be appealing to a nineteenth-century (or even seventeenth century) way of politics. For it was England in its aristocratic vestiges that would guarantee these fundamentals of the constitution of England, the individual's responsibilities and liberties. Parliamentary and political liberties, argued Dawson, were really "...vestiges of [the] aristocratic tradition" (Dawson 1939:47), that is, historic institutions. This lynch-pin of democracy, the aristocracy, Dawson does not expand on, and the reader is left to surmise how the aristocracy safeguards liberties. It might be that, in being independent, the guardians of England's liberties acted altruistically in politics. They were - presumably - able to resist the onslaught of totalitarianism. Dawson here may be seen to be naive, and also historically ignorant. However, as he does not tell the reader much about the composition of the aristocracy, these must be speculations only.

In this system, Dawson believes that the dynamics of a classic "mixed constitution" would exist and thrive. Social homogenisation would be prevented, suggests Dawson, and political uniformity avoided. One of the features of political diversity is the range of political groups within society. Dawson welcomes the proliferation of political parties in England. He comments,

> ...the coexistence of political parties within the political structure is one of the characteristic features of the English system. (Dawson 1939:51)

However, Dawson does not invest all his faith in this diversity. He admits that these parties would always be "...part of the machinery of government" (Dawson 1939:51), but their role in the wider life of the nation would "...tend to become less important", their place taken by Dawson's "national organisation of culture". Essentially, Dawson does not trust politicians to safeguard the life of the nation. This must be done by the people themselves, although the nation must be governed and run by the politicians. The latter group was best organised under the auspices of the ancient and mixed constitution of the land, the survival of which Dawson doubted in the moves he saw to the mass society of the late 1930's.

Eliot, on the other hand, was no lover of democracy in any form. In The Idea of a Christian Society, he hardly mentions party politics at all and the machinery of government rarely. These are side-issues for Eliot, who is principally concerned with the health of the culture of England. Eliot's antipathy to democracy had had a long history prior to 1939. Democracy he equated with the disintegration of society, as we saw above. Democracy to Eliot did not mean liberty, but licence. It was no surprise to Eliot that English democracy in the 1930's had come unstuck. It had become subsumed into economics, and become "...subservient...to plutocracy" (Eliot 1982:84). It had no interest in culture, art or religion, the very things that England needed strong in order to combat totalitarianism. As he had written in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism,

> The rise of the democracy to power in America and Europe is not, as had been hoped, to be a safeguard of peace and

civilisation. (Eliot 1933:103)

There was no way in which Eliot could agree with Dawson on how to safeguard the liberties of England. Dawson hoped for a revised democracy, a mixed constitution, whereas Eliot eschews discussion of the political structure virtually altogether and instead puts his faith in the Community of Christians.

Dawson's revision of the English constitution also encompasses the role of the Church and monarchy. As we saw above, Dawson sees the history of ancient Rome as paradigmatic for the society of 1939. Into this ancient but decayed society the Christian faith exploded and brought cohesion. In a somewhat Hegelian turn of phrase, Dawson comments that this transformation of society under the auspices of Christianity

> ...was something that the civilised world of Greece and Rome could not produce from within...it was deliverance from the world by a power coming from without. (Dawson 1939:89)

The Church was the "...guardian of the waters of life, and its essential task is to keep the sources pure and inviolate" (Dawson 1939:91). It held the same office in England during the twentieth century, and Dawson desired a revival of its spiritual power:

> Can this miracle be repeated in a world that has for a second time grown old?...It is obvious that the Christian must answer in the affirmative. (Dawson 1939:90)

Eliot saw the situation differently. Dawson puts the case forward for the *spiritual* power of Christianity to transform miraculously. Eliot put the emphasis more on the *intellectual* rigours of the Christian faith. To Eliot, the notion of "revival" and spiritual sensibilities was suspect. Instead, at the beginning of The Idea of a

Christian Society, he writes:

> I trust that the reader will understand from the beginning that this book does not make a plea for a "religious revival"...the term seems to me to imply a possible separation of religious feeling from religious thinking which I do not accept... (Eliot 1982:42)

The powers of Dawson's Church are produced like some *deus ex machina*, while Eliot's Church - or, rather, his Community of Christians - study and hone their skills in order to fend off Fascism and Communism.

Whilst Dawson and Eliot both put the Christian community (although in differing forms) at the heart of their arguments, there is a marked difference in their treatment of the Church's relationship with the Crown. Dawson devotes a whole chapter to the role of the monarchy in society and the importance of the Coronation Service. To open his discussion, he writes:

> The Coronation represents the most solemn and definite consecration of the State to Religion...Does it mean what it says or is it a gigantic piece of buffoonery?
> (Dawson 1939:95)

Doubtless responding to the Abdication Crisis of 1936, Dawson uses the Coronation Service and its Oaths to expand the discussion of the role of religion and the Church within society. Although the figure of the Monarch unites Church and State, Dawson argues that given the increasing secularisation of European society the Church's role was not one of some kind of joint ruler alongside the State. As society had not yet completely rejected Christianity, but was still "...open to Christian influences" (Dawson 1939:110), what the Church should seek was the compromise of what Dawson terms "the Concordat". This was

> ...any working system of limited co-operation between the

Church and the secular community. (Dawson 1939:110)

Dawson envisages co-operation in "...religious and social activities", such as, one presumes, the Aided and Controlled Schools and various charitable projects. Dawson's Concordat seems to be project-led rather than legislative or ideological.

Eliot, on the other hand and as we saw above, eschews all discussion of the role of the Monarch. After 1936, there are virtually no references to the monarchy in Eliot's writings, except (notably) the "broken King" of Little Gidding (Eliot 1969:191). The Idea of a Christian Society does not summon the monarchy in any of its discussions. Indeed, Eliot is at pains to distance himself from the whole Church-State debate: he declares that his concern "...is preliminary to the problem of Church and State" (Eliot 1982:46), being about the organisation of culture and society. The organisations of Church and State Eliot seems to believe are entirely secondary features of a nation. In this, Dawson and Eliot have different concerns.

Overall, it can be demonstrated that Eliot takes some ideas and even phraseology from Dawson. They both identify the underlying problems of England in the late 1930's, chief amongst them the inability of the existing political institutions in dealing with the problems. They likewise see the necessity of society having a cultural transformation, led by some form of group of men and women committed to Christianity. It is here, however, that Dawson and Eliot part company. Dawson is essentially a democrat, Eliot not. In the composition of his cultural group, and a revised Parliamentary system, Dawson is leagues away from Eliot. Over the role of the Church and the monarchy again the authors are far apart. We must, I suggest, look elsewhere for the real influences over Eliot's political and

social thought.

8.3. "...the writings of the Rev V A Demant..."

Demant loomed large in Christian political, social and economic thought during the 1920's and 1930's. An Anglican priest, in 1949 he became Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at the University of Oxford. He wrote and edited a number of works which were in the mainstream of Christian interpretations of society in his time. He commenced with co-editing the controversial 1927 Coal: A Challenge, and proceeded with This Unemployment in 1931, God, Man and Society in 1934 and Christian Polity in 1936. All of these books were known to Eliot and presumably intended by him to be the works included in the throw-away phrase given above in The Idea of a Christian Society.

By the time Eliot came to write The Idea of a Christian Society, he had long admired Demant's work. Eliot himself reviewed Coal: A Challenge - probably being one of the first to do so - in July 1927, in The Criterion (Eliot 1967x:69-73). Demant also drew Eliot's notice in the "Commentary" in the January 1932 The Criterion. Here, Eliot observes that - a propos of Demant's This Unemployment -

> The avenue from which Fr. Demant approaches the social problem is sympathetic to me...his whole attitude toward the "unemployment" problem seems to me to be very near the truth. (Eliot 1967hhh:271-273)

Demant's lucidity so impressed Eliot that he commissioned from him the article Dialectics and Prophecy which appeared in The Criterion in 1935 (Demant 1967:559-571). He was also a regular book-reviewer for The Criterion, with seven

volumes to his reviewing credit.

The first of Demant's works to come to Eliot's notice, the above-mentioned Coal: A Challenge, was co-edited with Mairet, Newsome, Symons, Porter, Reckitt and Swann. It was published a year after the General Strike and was written out of frustration that nothing positive had arisen from that conflict. Its tone was confrontational, as befitted both a volume that was intended to launch the writing careers of some of who would become leading lights in the Christian Socialist Movement of the 1930's, and a work published by the Hogarth Press. As no credits are given to any of the contributors, it is impossible to suggest which chapter was written by which author, and so in this present study the whole of the book is taken to be representative of Demant's writings and thus grist for Eliot's mill.

Immediately on picking up Coal: A Challenge, one is struck by its radical tones. "We are agreed", runs the Preface, "...that [the strikers'] protest is justified" (Demant 1927:8). The striking miners, moreover, were the lions of the day, and their protest a sign of hope for the nation:

> ...the obstinacy of the miners was the one sign of life in England... (Demant 1927:22)

Eliot, reviewing in 1927, placed the book - as indeed it was - on the left wing of the political spectrum. The authors, he wrote, "...would seem to be a kind of Socialist Christian" (Eliot 1967x:73). This would be enough to arouse Eliot's suspicion on its own, especially as he commented that the authors were "...too hasty in their scorn for the 'Constitution'" (Eliot 1967x:73). Eliot suggested that, as the authors seemed to want the Church to be strengthened, it was in fact "the Kingship" which "...must be strengthened" (Eliot 1967x:73). In the face of the perils in society which Coal : A

Challenge had recognised, Eliot was, instead of a radical solution which the book demanded, thinking along very traditional lines. 1927 was, of course, the year of Eliot's conversion and he was proceeding towards For Lancelot Andrewes' royalism.

Despite these great differences, there were some correlations between Coal : A Challenge and The Idea of a Christian Society. The first was concern with the health of communal life in the nation. In 1927, Demant lamented the collapse of community life in Britain: "There is no…communal life among us" (Demant 1927:9). Eliot in his 1939 book also saw the decline in local, community life and was eager to put forward the parish as the focus of community. Although both books recognise a common problem, the former does not examine solutions and here similarities end. One is not inclined to think, however, that the "Christian Socialist" authors of Coal would be much impressed by the belief that ancient parishes would enhance Britain's communal life.

Eliot proposed an ecclesiastical solution to the problem of declining community life, and essentially the authors of Coal see society's ills being cured by religion. "There is the ultimate, the religious problem", they wrote,

> We believe that it can be solved by a miracle...by the effort of the whole man to change the habit of soul and body... (Demant 1927:10)

The Idea of a Christian Society saw the problem in a similar light. "My point of departure", wrote Eliot,

> has been the suspicion that the current terms in which we discuss international affairs and political theory may only tend to conceal from us the real issues… (Eliot 1982:41)

This had led him to consider the problems of the time in a religious light:

> ...what I am concerned with here is...the organisation of values...which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic systems. (Eliot 1982:42)

Likewise Demant et al desired a spiritual critique of society:

> We must examine ourselves to see first what we *want* society to be, secondly what type of civilisation and culture we *will* create. (Demant 1927:31)

Eliot and the authors of Coal saw the debate on political affairs - although their writings in this instance were separated by some twelve years - as superficial. The fundamental issues, about civilisation and spiritual values, were being ignored. Although this broad concern was shared, their methods of proceeding from the general to the specific were very different. Indeed, it might be said that Eliot was not concerned with what Demant et al called the "incarnation" of spiritual values into society. Coal sought to

> ...urge [people] to form self-appointed councils whose purpose shall be to disembarrass their minds of preconceptions...[and] make every effort to bring the new social synthesis into consciousness. (Demant 1927:10)

Here, Eliot would have certainly parted company with Demant. This programme of local action groups did indeed smack of the "Christian Socialism" that Eliot surmised in his 1927 review. Eliot never envisaged such a method of "incarnating" his own social criticism. "My concern with contemporary society", he wrote in The Idea of a Christian Society,

> will not be primarily with specific defects...but with the question what - if any - is the "idea" of the society in which we live. (Eliot 1982:43)

Principles, not action, were Eliot's concern. Describing his work as "preliminary to the problem of Church and State", he went on to suggest that it tackled the problem

"...in the widest terms and in its most general interest" (Eliot 1982:45). On the scale of concepts in Eliot's mind, action was never one of the weightiest. It is well documented that Eliot had difficulty over the concept of "Christian action". In letters to Oldham, a fellow member of the Moot group, Eliot observed that

> ...the people whose thought I find most sympathetic are almost always those who are not concerned with any immediate solution... (Ackroyd 1984:184)

In discussing "Christian action" in matters political, Eliot believed that if the *Christian* side of the phrase were emphasised, then deadlock would ensue, people being driven back to their "various [denominational] positions". But if the *action* were emphasised, "...then...other forces of temperament come into play" (Eliot in Ackroyd 1984:188). Eliot here can too easily be seen in a negative light, of the man of letters suffering from what he called his "aboulie" or lack of will-power (Eliot 1988:486). However, this apparent reluctance to commit himself to action may have its roots deep in his philosophical concerns about unity and meaning, which were discussed earlier. Suffice it to say here, that Eliot believed that a plurality or shades of belief in any given community - and here it is the Christian community - bring division of purpose and will and hence weakness.

Democracy, the fount of plurality, was unacceptable to Eliot. Demant and his colleagues took a pro-democracy stand in Coal, which would not have found favour with Eliot. In suggesting ways forward from the stalemate of the General Strike, the writers believed that a representative council of interests would be beneficial:

> A true modern constitution would...unite the Trades Unions, the Employer's Association...into a permanent Council, with powers to frame and carry out the economic policy of the Nation. (Demant 1927:42)

Eliot, as we saw above in the discussion of Dawson's work, believed democracy to be the product of an effete liberalism which eventually would lead to the downfall of Western Civilisation.

Demant's pro-democracy stance would also have prevented much of his next publication, the 1931 This Unemployment: Disaster or Opportunity?, from forming part of Eliot's programme. This Unemployment was written at the height of the economic crisis in Britain, and at the behest of the Research Committee of the Christian Social Council (Demant 1931:8). Demant believed that the economic problems of the day were not just problems of industrialisation or politics; they were at heart

> ...a spiritual and social problem of the first magnitude. (Demant 1931:11)

According to Demant, this spiritual malaise had a profound effect on the culture of Britain. Its democratic system was being eroded. Demant wrote:

> The proportion of eligible voters who do not use their franchise is increasing...Politics appear to a growing section of the population to be futile in the presence of...industrial strains and stresses... (Demant 1931:14)

Demant obviously saw this as a retrograde step and an integral part of the growing weakness of Western Civilisation. For Eliot, democracy itself was such a sign, and its demise surely would not have troubled him overly much.

Demant was much exercised by the economic problems of the day, as can be seen from the above. He saw industrialisation as the major force for change in society, and as such engaged with it head-on in his social criticism. For Eliot, in contrast, economics were never more than a side-issue. Despite his bewailing the

"congeries of banks", and his own knowledge of the subject, Eliot preferred instead to focus on the need for spiritual reforms in society. Demant's position was stated clearly in This Unemployment:

> The main problem posed to the religious consciousness by the present situation is whether the age of the machine can be made to have any power of contributing to the fulfilment of the spiritual destiny of man…
> (Demant 1931:22)

Eliot, in The Idea of a Christian Society, was to ignore this question entirely. Demant called for an engagement of Christian minds in the economic theories of the industrialised world; Eliot simply ignored it, seeing economics as somehow the hand-maid to the industrial process which he saw dissolving the ancient fabric of English life of its vital source, the parochial system.

Despite this very different focus in This Unemployment, again in Demant's work there is a similar concern with the wider spiritual concerns of society. Demant saw the problems of society as having spiritual roots, and Eliot believed the same. Although Demant was to investigate industrialisation in much finer detail than Eliot, they shared a concern that the process of industrialisation was potentially harmful to human society, by turning it into some grotesque parody of the machines used in its processes of manufacture. Demant noted that there had arisen a "philosophy of industrialisation" which

> ...comprises such things as the right and duty of work…and the principles and practices of the monetary system as administered by the banks. (Demant 1931:12)

Eliot, in a more confrontational way, perhaps, likewise questioned the benefits of industrialisation on English society. "In an industrialised society like that of

England", he wrote, "I am surprised that the people retains as much Christianity as it does" (Eliot 1982:59). He argued against

> ...the hypertrophy of the motive of Profit [note capitalisation] into a social ideal, the distinction between the *use* of natural resources and their exploitation...the misdirection of the financial machine, the iniquity of usury... (Eliot 1982:61) [Eliot's Italics]

However close their instincts were in questioning industrialisation, Demant and Eliot's line of proceeding with it are markedly different. Demant engages with economic theory (most of This Unemployment is concerned with it); Eliot avoids it like a heresy.

Demant's next published work, the collection of essays Christian Polity, sees more correlation between Eliot and Demant. This is symbolised by the fact that it was published, in 1936, by Faber and Faber. As by that time Demant had become one of The Criterion's contributors, it would not be wide of the mark to suggest that the book was commissioned by Eliot himself and its contents reflected in some way the predilections of Demant's editor. Certainly Essay Four - "The Catholic Doctrine of Freedom in Relation to Secular Totalitarianism" - contained much discussion of the dangers of the European dictatorships, a concern which was exercising Eliot's mind at the time in the pages of The Criterion. In that essay, Demant stated that

> The Christian Church can only confront secular totalitarianism with a doctrine that sees [through it]...Secular totalitarianism is a heresy into which the spirit of man is being driven in reaction to the disasters and spiritual void which spring from the opposite heresy of secular liberalism. (Demant 1936:75-76)

This is remarkably close to Eliot's own position on the subject, and, moreover, couched in terms Eliot himself used. In his 1934 After Strange Gods, subtitled "A

Primer in Modern Heresy", Eliot had suggested that "...'le monde moderne avilit'. It also provincialises, and it can also corrupt" (Eliot 1934a:11). The chief problem with "le monde moderne" was liberalism. Eliot was so convinced that it was deeply seated within Western civilisation that he drew the following conclusion:

> In a society, like ours, worm-eaten with liberalism, the only thing possible for a person with strong convictions is to state a point of view... (Eliot 1934a:13)

Eliot appeared like some Christian evangelist, preaching the Gospel to the heathen in the hope of it falling on to fertile ground. Indeed, the whole of After Strange Gods is couched in religious language. Eliot associates liberalism with an anti-religious standpoint, and quotes the nineteenth century observer William Palmer who characterised the liberal spirit as

> ...eager to eliminate from the Prayer Book the belief in the Scriptures... (Eliot 1934a:22)

Liberalism was a modern-day heresy, dissolving culture. In this instance, Demant may have been influenced by Eliot, who certainly preceded him in naming liberalism as heresy. As Demant was by this time inside Eliot's circle, this cross-fertilisation of ideas was possible. However, Demant's case that liberalism in some way prepares the way for totalitarianism certainly found a home in Eliot's mind. In "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt", collected in the 1928 book For Lancelot Andrewes, Eliot had already seen liberalism (in its guise as humanism) as part of the process of the decline in religious values. Demant was to show that the decline did not end there, that the end of liberalism was in dictatorship. Eliot, by The Idea of a Christian Society, had fully fleshed out this process:

> By destroying traditional social habits of the people...

> liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial…control which is a desperate remedy for its own chaos. (Eliot 1982:49) [Eliot's Italics]

Demant and Eliot's thoughts on liberalism were, perhaps, symbiotic. Eliot provided Demant with the vocabulary with which to classify liberalism in religious and social terms, and then Demant helped Eliot crystallise his own thoughts on the dynamic of liberal thinking in society, the end result being The Idea of a Christian Society.

In confronting this liberalisation of society, the Church, according to Demant, was not effective. Some of the blame for decline must be laid at the Church's door:

> The secularisation of life is largely due to the failure of the Church...Totalitarianism is…a phenomenon which should turn the Church to a revolutionary penitence for its apostasy. (Demant 1936:131) [Demant's Italics]

The Church had accepted liberal values into itself, with disastrous consequences:

> The Church, by interpreting spiritual values as detached from, rather than giving significance to, other human purposes, has tended to send men to find some objects of faith and loyalty outside themselves…The State comes in conveniently as an object of Faith. (Demant 1936:124)

Eliot was to concur. Eliot considered that the Communist was a man of principle, and religious principle at that, who had been allowed to wander from the Christian fold for lack of something to believe in. Liberalism had instead raised

> ...the notion that religion was a matter of private belief and of conduct in private life… (Eliot 1982:53)

The structures of the Church had been dissolved, and those who wanted to believe in something greater than themselves were forced into the arms of Communism and

Fascism.

Both Demant and Eliot desired a return of whole-hearted Christianity to combat this Totalitarian menace. Demant, as we saw above, wanted the Church to repent. It had to return to a form of Apostolic zeal for the truth:

> Must not the Church therefore say to its own members... that that very source of its life must be exercised in a spiritually disciplined community, with a life of its own... (Demant 1936:127)

Eliot likewise saw this "spiritual purpose" as the key to reclaiming society from the dictatorial menaces:

> ...one can assert that the only possibility of control and balance [in society] is...religious...that the only hopeful course for a society...is to become Christian. That prospect involves, at least, discipline... (Eliot 1982:55)

Both authors use the word "discipline"; this was a watchword in Eliot's circle at the time.

Despite these likenesses, however, there is a key point in Christian Polity which would not have found a sympathetic hearing with its publisher. These were Eliot's bugbears of freedom and democracy. Demant in Coal had revealed himself as a democrat. In his 1936 book, he still showed himself to hold democratic beliefs. These were raised in Demant's discussion of the problem of Church and State, in essays four and seven of the book. The Church, he held, should concern itself with freedom:

> The freedom for which the Church can fight is the freedom of the person to be a person...The Church's bid for freedom has to be a message that this is a possibility for all men. (Demant 1936:91)

This "freedom of the person to be a person" seemed very similar to the central plank

in the liberal-humanist movement, of the sovereign autonomy of the individual. This way of reasoning Eliot had attacked in his essay on Irving Babbitt, who was according to Eliot

> By tradition an individualist, and jealous of the independence of individual thought. (Eliot 1975:281)

Although Demant here is particularly addressing the problem of totalitarian government, whereas Babbitt was not, the turn of phrase may have looked suspicious to Eliot. In essay seven of Christian Polity, Demant also writes in a liberal turn of phrase:

> Such an authority for the Church [to speak as a representative voice on political and moral issues] cannot now be claimed on the ground that it represents all citizens. It must be claimed on the more ultimate ground that the Church has a responsibility to safeguard the individual's rights... (Demant 1936:122)

Eliot's view of the Church was never as a *representative* organ, as Demant seems to assume it at least once was, and nor was it there, in Eliot's view, to *safeguard the individual*'s rights for anything. The Church was to safeguard *society* and *culture*, as a collective phenomenon. Eliot never thought in terms of individual rights but only the rights of large groups of individuals who were in a cultural tradition.

The next book under investigation here, God, Man, and Society was written, according to Demant's preface, after

> ...a request made to me by the Research Department of the Christian Social Council... (Demant 1934:ix)

According to Demant, a society may be called Christian when it fulfilled three key objectives. First, a society

> ...which allows or encourages behaviour which does

> violence to…the dignity of human nature is not a Christian Society. (Demant 1934:38)

Second, a society is Christian

> ...where the problems which call for the exercise of human effort are…the problems that inhere in man's…spiritual nature. (Demant 1934:38)

and third,

> ...a Christian social order will be one where the social problems of men living together come as completely as possible within the sphere of moral free will.
> (Demant 1934:39)

Did Eliot use these three "tests"? Throughout The Idea of a Christian Society, he does not attempt at length a definition of what a Christian Society actually is. The closest he comes to it is the following comment:

> ...the Christian can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organisation of society…It would be a society in which the natural end of man - virtue and well-being in community - is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end - beatitude - for those who have eyes to see it.
> (Eliot 1982:62)

There is some correlation between Eliot's definition and Demant's. Eliot's "virtue and well-being" may be held to be equivalent to Demant's "dignity of human nature" and its safe-keeping, and Eliot's "natural end of man" may be thought to contain Demant's concern for the "social problems of men". However, there the similarity ends. Eliot couches his definition of Christian society with a different emphasis than Demant. The latter - following the Thomist line - sees man's nature as "inherently spiritual", whereas Eliot seems to view the "supernatural end" (I here take Eliot's "supernatural end" as meaning "spiritual end") as being only for a few discerning souls. Demant, essentially, is egalitarian; Eliot differentiates between

what he called the "Christian Community" and the minority "Community of Christians". The former's Christianity was unconscious and instinctual, the latter's was conscious and reflective (Eliot 1982:59). Although I think we must not suggest that Eliot saw salvation only for a few - his Christian tradition would have informed him that it was God's desire for everyone - his (admittedly sparse) discourse on salvation in The Idea of a Christian Society might be considered ambiguous on this point.

Eliot does offer two further definitions of Christian society, albeit by saying what it is not. There are two points of view as to how to judge whether England is a Christian society. The first judges it a non-Christian state

> ...when religious practices have been abandoned...and when in effect prosperity in this world for the individual...has become the sole aim. (Eliot 1982:47)

The second point of view would judge that

> ...a society has not ceased to be Christian until it has become positively something else. (Eliot 1982:47)

In neither of these definitions - and Eliot favours the second - do Demant's "three tests" seem to have had an influence.

Despite this methodological difference, there are some points on which Eliot's work is similar to that of Demant's God, Man and Society. Both saw the role of the Christian faith as pivotal in the future of society. "The Christian religion", wrote Demant,

> claims to offer through Christ...the life of Truth, not in any possible world but in the world in which God has set man his task... (Demant 1934:4)

Christianity could, therefore, be the basis on which society functioned. Eliot held

the same point of view. He wrote that

> ...the only alternative…to totalitarianism…is to aim at a Christian society. (Eliot 1982:52-53)

In order that Christian tenets could be adopted, Demant held that Churches had to become political. He believed that in some respects the Churches were becoming so, but that the rank-and-file members were not yet able to do so (whether Demant means the Church's institutions or its clergy when he talks of the "official Churches", is not clear):

> In spite of the official Churches, the greater part of the religious believers…continue to act and think as though religion were only concerned with...man's relationship with his personal deity. (Demant 1934:6-7)

There were

> ...few signs that congregations realise that religion has a task in drawing within their field the social problems of mankind. (Demant 1934:6-7)

He called on the Churches to raise a more politically conscious membership:

> There is still a task before the Church in arousing the Christian Community to the possibility of redeeming…social evils. (Demant 1934:12)

Not all the Churches' members, however, were to be encouraged to attempt this:

> The Christian religion will always make calls upon the heroic choices of its adherents…But there is no warrant in Christian ethics for demanding…heroism for the majority. (Demant 1934:16)

Here, Demant makes an important if not fully developed point about the varying degrees of political and social involvement he expects from Church members. Such participation in solving society's ills he does not see coming from the majority of believers, whom he views as simply doing their quotidian tasks.

Political action must come from the "heroic" few. These, as far as we can see, do not seem to be connected in any formal way to their Churches' hierarchy. They appear to be laity. This outline is remarkably close to Eliot's “Christian Community” and "the Community of Christians". To the former, Christianity

> ...must be primarily a matter of behaviour and habit, must be integrated with its social life... (Eliot 1982:59)

Like Demant's "majority of men", these peoples’ pursuits are a "...fulfilling [of] their daily duties and associations". Eliot's other grouping, the "Community of Christians", appear like Demant's "heroic" Christians. Of these, Eliot wrote that they

> ...will be the consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual authority. (Eliot 1982:59)

Like Demant's "heroes", Eliot's Community of Christians was "...not the Church in any one of its senses", being an unofficial grouping. Although, as we shall see, Eliot possibly derived his ideas for the "Community of Christians" from other sources, there certainly is a chance that Demant provided him a model, albeit brief.

God, Man, and Society shares other concerns with The Idea of a Christian Society. As with Coal, industrialisation is attacked. "The breakdown of our entire Western Civilisation", warns Demant,

> is clearly envisaged in the self-destructive forces of the industrialisation... (Demant 1934:27-31)

The processes of manufacture tended to turn man away from its natural focus of attention, that of salvation, to the concerns of profits. It is the Churches' task to provide a corrective:

> ...the Church is called upon to recover what she once regarded as the supernatural dispensation, the setting forth of an order in human activities with her laws as standards of reference. (Demant 1934:33)

Eliot would have concurred. He would also have agreed with Demant's apparent dislike of urbanisation:

> It is well known that urbanisation makes for an aggressive, proud, fatalistic, and neurotic life outlook. (Demant 1934:218)

Behind each writer there appears to be a wistful, even romantic, view of some kind of organic and rural English past where industrialisation had not reared its head, a kind of society attached to the soil as Eliot was later to envisage in East Coker. Demant put this yearning for organic community in these words:

> Human association is *inherent* in human reality, and its disturbance is due to that perversion of man's spiritual nature which Christians call sin and which seeks absolute instead of functional ends...The validity of all human activity in an organic whole can only be sustained by an orientation of life which is more than a philosophy of social living. (Demant 1934:226-227) [Demant's Italics]

This might be taken as the basis for Eliot's insistence on the parish's "community unit", and also why he termed his two groupings in society the "Christian *Community*" and the "*Community* of Christians".

In spite of these strong correlations between God, Man, and Society and The Idea of a Christian Society, there are issues on which their authors differ, and sometimes markedly. As with Demant's other works discussed above, it is clear in God, Man, and Society that he is a writer of democratic principles. Although he sees contemporary democracy failing, he is nonetheless convinced that it is the only possible system of government and wishes to see it revitalised. He puts the locus of

authority within the citizenry of the nation:

> …the citizens in representative government are nominally the authority in the State... (Demant 1934:88)

As we saw above, such sentiments were impossible to Eliot. He was not concerned at all with the machinery of government. His concerns in The Idea of a Christian Society "...are preliminary to the problems of Church and State" (Eliot 1982:45), and what form a Christian State should take is a matter of little interest to him:

> What I mean by the Christian State is not any particular political form, but whatever State is suitable to a Christian Society... (Eliot 1982:46)

It is clear that in Eliot, Christian Society comes first, and the State afterwards. For Demant, this dynamic if unfeasible. State and Society are inextricably linked; there is no causal relationship between them. The State appears to have an independent existence from society. "The State", he wrote,

> is the community's organised function of government…It is necessary for the Christian citizen to be clear as to what he can expect the State to do before he can judge how far his own action is rightly reflected in the organisation of government. (Demant 1934:89)

Demant's notion of the independent or disinterested State was not just for the benefit of Christians within society. Demant's notion of society was essentially pluralist, although he held that Christians would be in the great majority. The State had to reflect this. He wrote:

> It [can] no longer be laid down that "it pertains to the office of a Prince to care for the good life of his people in such a fashion as conduces [sic] to the attainment of eternal bliss" (Aquinas), for the State now includes many whose conception of eternal bliss [are] at variance…It is simply a fact that the modern state includes people of all religions... (Demant 1934:90-91)

For Eliot, this was unacceptable. Plurality was a sign of inherent weakness in a system. His remark in the 1934 After Strange Gods, about the danger of too many "free thinking Jews", shows this attitude in its fullness. By 1939, with The Idea of a Christian Society, this attitude was toned down, but was still discernible. On commenting that it would be difficult to classify people as Christian and non-Christian, Eliot writes

> And perhaps there will always individuals who, with great creative gifts of value to mankind...will yet remain blind, indifferent, or even hostile [to the Christian faith]. That must not disqualify them from exercising the talents they have been given. (Eliot 1982:68)

Eliot's "perhaps" shows how incongruous he felt it was that anyone could be indifferent or hostile to Christianity. He restricts the membership of these dissentients in society to "individuals", not groups. Demant's plea for pluralism would have been an aberration to Eliot, especially as he linked this to democracy:

> The careful regard which the State pays to minorities has been laid down as one of the tests of democracy. (Demant 1934:107)

Eliot was neither in favour of democracy nor minorities. Despite several correlations between the work of Demant and Eliot, notably Demant's nascent idea of Christian society being made up of "heroic" and "normal" citizens, there are too many differences between their work for us to take too seriously Eliot's own view that "the writings of the Rev Demant" played a part in forming his own views on social criticism. Indeed, a case can be made out that the flow of influence was the other way round.

8.4. Eliot's "deep debt" to Jacques Maritain

It is curious that Eliot was not put off Maritain's work by the title of the book he cites in The Idea of a Christian Society. Maritain's Humanisme intègral, published in October 1938, is an attempt at combining humanism with Christian thought in the face of the rising Totalitarian regimes of Europe. (The work was later translated by Adamson and published as True Humanism. In the following, I use this translation). Although Eliot would have had respect for Maritain's Thomist pedigree, he would not - at least at first sight - have had any time for Maritain's apparent humanism, Eliot's antipathy to which we have seen above. Perhaps, in citing Maritain's work, Eliot was playing a kind of game, suggesting that he read the latest continental thought on the problems in hand - and in French to boot - so as to give his endeavours extra credence.

Despite these reservations, there is much to suggest that Maritain's work would have found favour with Eliot, and perhaps even influenced him. Maritain's departure for his Humanisme intégral was similar to that of Eliot. Maritain believed that "Modern civilisation is a worn-out vesture..." (Maritain 1946:201). Eliot concurs in The Idea of a Christian Society. The problems tackled there are those which "...must occupy many minds for a long time to come" (Eliot 1982:41); they were "fundamental", and were about "...the organisation of values, and a direction of religious thought" (Eliot 1982:42). Maritain saw the origins of the social problems of his day as stemming from the world of the Renaissance and Reformation. The world issuing from these movements has

> ...been torn by powerful...energies, where truth and error

> feed upon each other… (Maritain 1946:ix)

Eliot would have concurred. The world of the Renaissance, according to Eliot, was destructive. This attitude may be seen in his comments on Hobbes in For Lancelot Andrewes. Hobbes was, according to Eliot,

> ...one of those curious little upstarts whom the chaotic motion of the Renaissance tossed into an eminence... (Eliot 1970g:29)

By "Renaissance", Eliot meant "...the period between the decay of Scholastic philosophy and the rise of modern science" (Eliot 1970g:29). In other words, it was the same world that Maritain derided. Hobbes' fault was the same that Maritain had observed. Hobbes'

> ...attitude...toward moral philosophy has by no means disappeared from human thought… (Eliot 1970g:30)

The Renaissance, therefore, "commingled truth and error", and its dynamics were still operating in human thought. This area of study long interested Eliot, and indeed in his Clark Lectures of 1926 he had outlined his intention to write a trilogy of books on the subject (Eliot 1996:41).

By the way Eliot and Maritain trace society's development from the Renaissance, they clearly invest *ideas* with power, such as those of Constitutional Monarchy and democracy. Both writers were concerned with the role of ideas in society, and how by changing these society could be reformed. Maritain saw the failure of the Christian world in terms of its intellectual incapacity:

> There is a [third] cause…which makes apparent to what an extent modern civilisation, even when it calls itself Christian, has suffered from a lack of Christian *philosophy*. (Maritain 1946:110) [Maritain's Italics]

This "lack of philosophy" had prevented a medieval-style realisation of Christian principles in society as well as individual souls. Eliot also wanted a transformation of ideas in order to create a new Christian world. "The Idea of a Christian society", he wrote,

> is one which we can accept or reject; but if we are to accept it, we must treat Christianity with a great deal of more *intellectual* respect than is now wont…
> (Eliot 1982:43) [Eliot's Italics]

Being concerned primarily with ideas, both writers had similar reactions to Communism, which they considered as a rival to Christianity. Eliot's concerns have already been dealt with in the above discussion, and it is easy to see correlations with the work of Maritain. "Communism", Maritain wrote,

> is a complete system of doctrine and life which claims to reveal to man the meaning of his existence...It is a religion...of atheism... (Maritain 1946:28)

Although Eliot's opinions on Communism were formed before he read Maritain's work, it is striking how close they come in seeing Communism as a religion with its own doctrine and ethics. There is a further passage in Maritain which may well have influenced Eliot. This is specifically about how the religious feeling of a people can be turned from Christianity into Communism. Maritain writes,

> [Communism] is not bound up in Russia...with a rationalist tradition...its basis is in the nature of the religious feeling of the people which...can be turned in one or other direction...
> (Maritain 1946:59)

Eliot was concerned that this religious "indifference" would lead to the adoption of a totalitarian system, as it had done in Germany and Russia. Eliot thought that the vast majority of the English had only a "vestigial" Christianity, which was

unthinking and expressed in behaviour only, and that the problem was that it had no defences against the new doctrines of absolutism. The liberal way of life which had created this morass, according to Eliot,

> ...can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial...control which is a...remedy for [liberalism's] chaos. (Eliot 1982:49)

Into the vacuum liberalism creates, came either Communism or Fascism. Although Maritain and Eliot have similar views, and we might suggest that Eliot is influenced by Maritain by his view that Communism feeds off religious indifference, it must be stated that Maritain is much more detailed in his analysis of Communism and its social impact than Eliot. Eliot never develops his ideas beyond a few paragraphs throughout his whole oeuvre, whereas Maritain in True Humanism alone spends over fifty pages discussing it. Another point of difference is that Maritain is willing to concede Communist principles in Christianity. "Among the original elements of Communism", he writes,

> there are some which are also Christian. St Thomas More held certain communist ideas...it is the mis-directed Christian virtues...which communism seeks to direct to its own uses. (Maritain 1946:32-33)

For Maritain, Communism was a kind of a (wrongly) developed Christianity. For Eliot, Communism was separate from Christianity but parasitic upon it.

Another area in which Maritain and Eliot appear to agree is that of society's possible structures. For Maritain, the humanity's goal was relatively simple:

> ...[man] is made for a supernatural end: to see God as God beholds himself... (Maritain 1946:2-3)

Society had to seek to form itself so that this "supernatural end" of man could be

realised on earth. There was another "end" of man, however, and this was the "natural end". This dual nature of human existence was summed up by Maritain in the following words:

> ...in the practical and moral order we come to the conception...that man and human life are simultaneously directed to two different *absolutely final* ends, one…which is purely natural and is prosperity here on earth, the other the supernatural final end which is perfect beatitude in heaven. (Maritain 1946:13-14) [Maritain's Italics]

Eliot, at first glance, may appear to have assimilated this Thomist doctrine. His thoughts on society's use the Maritain/Thomist vocabulary of natural and supernatural ends and beatitude:

> ...It would be a society in which the natural end of man - well-being in community - is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end - beatitude - for those who have eyes to see it. (Eliot 1982:62)

Despite this similarity in language, however, there is a divergence here. For Maritain, *everyone's* goal is both natural and supernatural; for Eliot, the natural goal is "for all", yet the supernatural end (at least on one reading) is only for "those who have eyes to see it". Although this does not logically limit beatitude to a specific group, it would not seem inappropriate to conclude that Eliot here is thinking of a minority of Christians, an idea which fits with his notion of the "Community of Christians". As we saw in our discussion on Demant, Eliot - at least in the pages of The Idea of a Christian Society - might be seen as ambiguous on the subject of salvation. Maritain is democratic; Eliot appears elitist.

We have already seen that Eliot's "Community of Christians" is crucial in society, acting like the nation's guiding conscience. For Maritain, there was a

similar group which he saw working in society. In examining the life of the monastic Orders, he makes an observation that

> ...the man who is engaged in [the] profane and temporal order [as distinct from the Monastic Orders] should...tend towards sanctity...for the justice of the Gospels claims to penetrate all things... (Maritain 1946:115)

This would seem close to Eliot's Community of Christians who themselves had to "attain union with the divine" in their quest after beatitude. However, like Maritain's democratic wish for all to have natural and supernatural ends, his vision of the men "engaged in the profane and temporal order" is more democratic than it might appear. Although

> ...it is...in the order of things that it is not in the secular life, but in certain souls hidden from the world...that the first light of the dawn of sanctity...is breaking.
> (Maritain 1946:119)

this new way is not to be confined to that first group. It must

> ...spread from thence into all our temporal and secular ways of life. (Maritain 1946:119)

Eliot's Community of Christians, in contrast, has no point of contact with wider society elucidated for them. It remains sequestered. Maritain does envisage, however, a group which has some correlation to the Community of Christians, despite his democratic leanings. In reviewing the historical aspect of social organisation, he suggests that

> ...the part played by the agent of unity which was played by the Christian King in regard to the city of yesterday belongs...to the most politically evolved ...Christian laity and the popular elite in the new temporal order...
> (Maritain 1946:162)

These persons he calls the "cives praeclari", that is

> ...that enlightened political element who will play this animating and formative part of which I have been speaking...It follows from this that a city animated and guided by such elements will [be]...under the reign of Christ. (Maritain 1946:163)

These "cives praeclari" would seem to be near to Eliot's Community of Christians.

He calls it "...the idea of an organised political fraternity" (Maritain 1946:164), and its members would

> ...be to the State…as in the sacred sphere the various religious orders are to the Church… (Maritain 1946:165)

This would appear a typically French view of the body politic, arising from the constitutional thought of the seventeenth century, which had its natural end in Louis XIV's dictum *"l'etat? C'est moi"*. Eliot, following an English model instead, would have found this theory alien. Maritain does eventually clarify his thoughts on his cives praeclari, after his discussion of the pluralist society (more of this below). He calls it

> ...a gathering together of men of good will…acting in concert with professional groups and ready…to collaborate in things useful for the common good. (Maritain 1946:262)

It should be noted that there is no hint of any doctrinal or social prerequisite to this group, as there is in Eliot's Community of Christians

Despite these ostensible similarities, there are several ideas in Maritain's work which are divergent from those in Eliot. Foremost is the concept of humanism, which lies at the heart of Maritain's vision. Maritain sees his work in the light of humanity's quest for freedom. His whole endeavour as a writer is, he claims, in the sphere of "practical philosophy", which he describes as

> ...still philosophy and remain[ing] a mode of speculative

> knowledge; but…it is from the outset directed to action as its object...it is above all a science of freedom.
> (Maritain 1946:viii)

Eliot would not have described his work in like manner. He may have preferred to describe his social criticism as a "science of order". Freedom, to Eliot, was potentially dangerous. This sense of freedom - for the individual as well as society as a whole - was the setting for Maritain's attempt at reintegrating humanism into a religious understanding of the world. Maritain coined the phrase "heroic humanism" for this, the paragon of which was the recently canonised Sir Thomas More. He was to be considered as the true blend of Catholicism and the New Learning of the Renaissance which was the birth of modern humanism:

> The example of the humanist saint, the admirable Thomas More for instance, is from this point of view particularly significant. (Maritain 1946:xiii)

(Maritain conveniently forgets More's penchant for burning Lollards). Maritain is keen to counter the opinion that "...humanism can by definition only be...anti-religious" (Maritain 1946:xiv):

> ...Western humanism springs from religious sources... classical and Christian...by the very fact that the order of medieval Christendom was one of unity of soul and flesh...it held in its consecrated forms a virtual and implicit humanism. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries this began to "appear" and became manifest.
> (Maritain 1946:xv)

Maritain sees humanism as an organic growth from and natural end to medieval Catholicism. Eliot rather saw humanism as parasitic upon decayed forms of Catholicism. Humanism and Catholic Order, believed Eliot, were mutually exclusive. Maritain's wish to combine the two was folly, despite Maritain's concern

that

> ...this new humanism [i.e. integral, or heroic, humanism]...I see as directed towards a social-temporal realisation of that evangelical concern for humanity which ought not to exist only in the spiritual order... (Maritain 1946:xvii)

and that he sought to give this new humanism a theological underpinning:

> ...[in] this new epoch in the history of Christian culture the creature will neither be belittled nor annihilated before God; his rehabilitation will not be in contradistinction to God or without God, but *in* God...humanism indeed, but a theocratic humanism...integral humanism, the humanism of the incarnation. (Maritain 1946:65)

The phrase "...the humanism of the incarnation" is simply not one we would associate with Eliot. Overall, Maritain's concern to give a revitalised humanism a key role in social order was unacceptable to Eliot. In thinking of society, one started from God, and not humankind.

Another area of marked difference between the two writers is that of the nature of culture and civilisation. For Maritain, "...the two terms can be treated as synonymous" (Maritain 1946:89), whereas in Eliot there is a greater differentiation. For Eliot, civilisation was a cross-national phenomenon (Eliot 1982:41), a set of shared values, which in Europe's case were principally inherited from classical Greece and Rome (Eliot 1967r:124). Culture, on the other hand, was something on a lesser scale, and could be localised or even class-based. One is tempted to suggest that in Eliot's view culture was the localised form of civilisation. There may be English, Welsh, French and German cultures, but there is a European civilisation. Culture was "...a society's or a group's established way of life" (Kojecky 1971:208). Culture was also dependent on social class (Eliot

1982:91), whereas civilisation was not. For Maritain, culture/civilisation was concerned not just

> ...with the necessary material development which permits the proper life here below, but also primarily with men's moral development, the development of…activities which rightly merit the name of human progress...Since this development is not only material, but also and principally moral…the religious element plays a primary part in it... (Maritain 1982:88-89)

This religious side of things Maritain firmly places not within a culture, but within the life of God, being transcendent:

> For the Christian, the true religion is essentially supernatural and…it is not a part of man…it belongs to an inner life of God. It transcends all civilisation…it is strictly universal. (Maritain 1946:90)

A certain dualism may here be detected in Maritain's thought. There appears to be a dichotomy between the life of humanity and that of God. Religion belongs to God, and - it would seem - cannot be mingled with human life. Although Eliot would surely have acquiesced with Maritain that religion transcends all civilisations and cultures, he would not, perhaps, have agreed with the Frenchman that "it is not a part of man...nor of a culture, nor of civilisation". The whole thrust of Eliot's social criticism, surely, is that British and European culture is (or has been) a *Christian* culture which needs reforming and preserving. Maritain further limits culture and civilisation to an earthbound sphere in the words:

> ...culture and civilisation have a specific object (the earthly and perishable…life here below) whose proper order is the natural order...The order of culture or civilisation appears then as the order of the things of time, as the *temporal order*. (Maritain 1946:90) [Maritain's Italics]

For Maritain, culture and civilisation (it is unfortunate that, after defining them as

the same entity, he continues to use both terms) are *incidental* to religion, almost arbitrary. For Eliot, culture and civilisation (in their differing aspects) are the necessary *incarnation* of the faith held by the people, and therefore he can talk of a *Christian* society. One reason for this difference of emphasis perhaps is the different denominations to which the two writers belonged. For Maritain, the Christianity of his cross-national Roman Catholic Church traversed different cultures. While the Christian faith remained the same (ostensibly), the civilisations it lived in were diverse. This may well have led him to articulate the opinion that the cultural setting of faith was arbitrary, if not unimportant. Eliot, however, was fast in his Church of England, the *Englishness* of which he strongly emphasised, as can be seen in For Lancelot Andrewes. He was more parochial, more willing to see the culture around the faith as intrinsically part of that faith, so that if the culture disappeared, then faith would also. This was simply not possible for Maritain. He believed that even if civilisations and cultures died, then the Christian faith would live on, being transcendent. This gave him great hope for the future of Christianity, despite European Totalitarianism. "The Church does not die", he wrote, "civilisations die" (Maritain 1946:134). And in a paragraph that would surely have displeased Eliot, Maritain comments:

> ...neither should we be astonished that Christian civilisations perish as do other ones…Such is the growth of human history, which is not a process of repetition, but of expansion and progress. (Maritain 1946:286-287)

For Maritain, Christianity was an inextinguishable light, held in the clay vessel of culture. The vessel may occasionally break and be rebuilt, but the light remains constant. For Eliot, there is no such triumphant tone. He is apocalyptic in the face

of rising Fascism and Communism, which he sees as rival creeds and cultures. For him, the light of Christianity and the lamp of culture in which it shines are inseparable, and they break together.

This distinction being made, it is easier to see how Maritain and Eliot differ widely on the question of cultural pluralism. For Maritain, the Church being irrefrangible it did not need a uniform culture or uniform religious practices in which to flourish. Differences of opinion or even religious faiths did not matter. In opposing Totalitarianism's threats, Maritain envisaged in society which he described as

> ...the conception of a *pluralist commonweal*, which will gather together in its organic unity a diversity of social groupings…a pluralist commonweal would give the fullest possible measure of autonomy…
> (Maritain 1946:157-158) [Maritain's Italics]

For Eliot, cultural diversity meant weakness, and a descent into Liberalism which paved the way for Totalitarianism. In the light of Eliot's insistence that virtually all the inhabitants of his Christian Society had to hold the Christian faith, Maritain's vision of pluralist society must surely have been unacceptable. "In the modern city", Maritain wrote,

> believers and unbelievers are mingled...a Christian commonweal under modern conditions could not be other than a Christian city within whose walls believers and unbelievers live alike and share in the same temporal commonwealth... (Maritain 1946:159-161)

Not only would there be a diversity of groups, opinions and beliefs, but these plural interests and mores would have legal status as well. In Maritain's scheme of things, by the above definition, Eliot's more uniform Christian Society has the hallmarks of

being a quasi-Totalitarian system. Eliot surely could not have been but aware of this major difference. Maritain, moreover, did not see a society's religious life as being the hub of its unity, as it would be in Eliot's. "The unity of such a civilisation", Maritain wrote,

> would no longer be a unity of essence or of a constitution assured from above by the profession of the same faith and dogmas [it is]...a unity of orientation...for a form of common life in better accord with the supra-temporal interests of the person. (Maritain 1946:162)

This "unity of orientation" coalesced around the quest for the material well-being of the individuals and groups in society - Maritain's "natural" end of man - which in turn was the basis on which the "supernatural" was founded. Maritain and Eliot have different loci of unity. Maritain's is the "natural" end of man, his economic well-being. Eliot's focus of unity is more in line with the "supernatural end" of man, his Christian destiny. The former enables Maritain to be pluralistic, the latter forces Eliot to be monolithic. As Maritain put it,

> Such a unity [in society] will not be…a maximal one [i.e.. based on doctrine]: it will be, on the contrary, a *minimal* one, its core of formation...on the plane of the temporal itself…[this] unity does not *in itself* require a unity of faiths and religion... (Maritain 1946:166)

Eliot's scheme of society was, by this definition, medieval. Maritain's society was startlingly modern by comparison. As the medieval system promoted harmony and uniformity, so Maritain's modern order

> ...multiplies liberties...this solution gathers the unification of the temporal community into one natural point: a simple unity of friendship...we must renounce the search for a common profession of faith… (Maritain 1946:167-168)

By this statement, we may see that, ultimately, Maritain's social criticism is actually

poles apart from that of Eliot. Although they have similarities, in their fear of Communism, their doctrinal beliefs, and their opinion that a committed group of Christians held the key to future Christian society, Maritain's quest for an "integral humanism" - enough by itself to ward off Eliot - and his profoundly liberal ideas on social structure, set the two apart. In looking for the true influences on The Idea of a Christian Society, we must surely pass by Maritain.

8.5. "Mr Middleton Murry's The Price of Leadership"

If Maritain has to be passed by, then also must Murry, at least at first glance. It is perhaps surprising that Eliot included Murry's book on his short-list of influences in The Idea of a Christian Society. Eliot, despite collaborating with Murry on The Athenaeum, in print at least was almost always hostile to his works. He had described Murry at various turns as "...merely an Orthodox Unitarian" (Eliot 1967t:256), "...a genuine heretic" (Eliot 1967aa:179), a Bergsonian (Eliot 1967dd:344), and an atheist (Eliot 1967iii:468). If we are to believe Eliot, there was always a profound disagreement between him and Murry. Eliot found himself "...nearly always opposed" to Murry (Eliot 1967ccc:308). However, it can be argued that Eliot's public opinions were often contradictory and even designed to hide their opposite. This I suggest is somewhere near the truth with Murry, at least in his social thought, and in examining Murry's book we are brought closer, I suggest, to the spring from which the waters of Eliot's social theory were drawn. (There are, however, major differences, and these will be drawn out as we proceed).

Murry's The Price of Leadership had started as a lecture course "...which I was

invited to deliver in the summer of 1937 by the Incorporated Society of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools" (Murry 1939:7) It is therefore not surprising that education lies at the heart of this book, and how educational reforms were needed in order to bolster society against the threats from Totalitarian Europe. In order to posit his ideas on education, Murry needed also to flesh an idea for society in which education could take place. For him this idea was fundamentally Christian.

Murry has a similar approach to Eliot in the social structure within such Christian Society. For Murry, there has always been a "ruling class" in England, a fact which "...no unbiased observer could deny" (Murry 1939:25). Traditionally, this ruling class was instinctively Christian:

> To be an Englishman was to acknowledge oneself a member of a Christian society. In such a society it was natural that the Christian Church should be "established"...and that education should be under its control. (Murry 1939:38)

This system was eventually to be dismantled, however. According to Murry, the "Puritans" (he does not define the term) dissented from this cultural-religious unity, which set in motion a chain of secularisation:

> Puritans, by dissociating themselves from this social tradition of Christianity, contributed to the secularisation of the Church in the eighteenth century. (Murry 1939:38)

The author of The Humanism of Irving Babbitt would surely have agreed: Protestantism eventually leads to secularisation. For Murry, the ruling class therefore not being totally congruent with a Christian educated class, the role of the ruling elite in its cultural aspect was now under question, and

> The question is, how this ruling class should be recruited and by what "beliefs it shall be guided?"...In England...it is

> recruited from the relatively rich...A capitalist class is the raw economic fact: to become a ruling-class, it has to be educated into the role. (Murry 27-28)

The question was, therefore for Murry, a question of education, and he expatiates on this at length. Eliot also spends time discussing education in The Idea of a Christian Society, but it is a fraction of Murry's. The key similarity between Murry and Eliot here is the creation of a ruling class. For Murry, by "ruling class"

> ...I mean...a really dynamic class - to rule politically...I maintain that this class of men, educated for political and administrative rule, is a necessary class in modern society... (Murry 1939:45)

This scheme would appear similar to Eliot's "Community of Christians", at least in the aspect of a group with consciously held common aims to "...decide the future of society." However, it must be said that Murry does seem to envisage a more cohesive group than Eliot's "rather nebulous" community. This is a major difference between Eliot's Community of Christians and Murry's "ruling class". Murry makes his group part of the established class system of England, envisaged like a throw-back to the Victorian ideal of the "governing class", educated for their task in the great public schools and Universities. This would limit its membership to those who could afford such an expensive education - presumably the upper middle and upper classes. For Eliot, however, never imbued with a great sense of class consciousness, given his American upbringing, was more egalitarian: membership of the Community of Christians was based solely on merit. Here, Eliot is radical, and Murry conservative. The absence of this ruling class, forebodes Murry, means that society is heading for disaster. Here, Eliot and Murry are twins in their fear of social collapse leading to the adoption of totalitarianism. Murry writes,

> ...[the lack of this ruling class] means we are heading for a peculiar form of the totalitarian state...Theoretically, I can conceive of a sort of *tertium quid* between Fascism and Communism... (Murry 1939:46)

By recovering its Christian origins through the offices of a specifically educated ruling class, argues Murry, such a fall may be avoided. Although Murry's way of creating this ruling class - principally by educating its candidates in a modified public-school system - is different from that of Eliot (who allows the members of the Community of Christians simply to "appear" naturally), the function of both groups is the same.

In promoting this ruling elite, which gains its position by education and not election, Murry proclaims himself as a non-Democrat. His credentials are thus the same as Eliot's. Both writers harbour grave doubts as to the effectiveness of the democratic system. This doubting of democracy - common in the 1930's - had a terrifying root: Hitler had come to power by democratic process, principally by preying upon the fears and jealousies of the uninformed minds of the masses. Murry writes,

> We need to free our minds of much cant about democracy. The moment it is regarded...as something which we have attained...it has ceased to be vital...To achieve the form of full democracy...is merely the beginning of the real test upon society...the problem is to educate democracy.
> (Murry 1939:47)

Presumably, this "education" involves convincing the mass of the need of this unelected ruling class. Indeed, one of the failings of democracy is that it has "...ignored the necessity of a ruling class" (Murry 1939:48).

There is another similarity between Murry's work and Eliot's which, despite

the otherwise light-weight nature of Murry's contribution to the political debate of the 1930's, is extremely important in the context of this study and its exploration of Idealism in Eliot's social criticism. This similarity can be seen if Murry's stress on society's rural aspects is examined. Both Murry and Eliot have what we might term a rural focus. Eliot holds that the parish remains the true "community unit" for England, a system which, it can be argued, only has real significance in rural districts where it often coincides with village-based boundaries. Eliot also decries industrialisation. Murry too has a pastoral ideal. But whereas Eliot's is quite carefully concealed, Murry's is open and considerably romanticised. "I sometimes stay", he tells his reader,

> ...in a sparsely populated parish…Every man in the village works on the land, including the innkeeper.
> (Murry 1939:11)

He laments that there is in this village "...an empty house, which used to be the Rectory", and that "...the wheelwright has gone to glory", and when

> ...a new farm-tumbril comes that way - which is seldom enough - the body is mass-manufactured; the wheels are stamped, like buttons, out of steel, and the shafts are iron piping. (Murry 1939:13-14)

Murry gives considerable space to his paean on rural decay - including a rather painful description of the plight of a "young lad" who was run over by a car - and it might perhaps be seen to be over-sentimental. Although Eliot may have agreed with the gist that rural life was in jeopardy, he would I feel never have voiced his fears in such emotional ways. But he would have agreed with Murry's view that the life of the parish church was central to that of the community in which it was set:

> The parish church in the rural district is still the focus of

> [community] life...In the church the inhabitants of the village become conscious of community...And in the cases where the parson is still mindful of his relation to the village community...he is...the father of his parishioners... (Murry 1939:89)

Behind this statement lurks the figure of Coleridge and On the Constitution of Church and State. Coleridge had envisaged a man of learning (though not necessarily a priest) in each parish to be exactly the sort of person Murry wants his parson to be. Coleridge plays an important part in The Price of Leadership, and Murry suggests that

> ...Coleridge was the first English political thinker who achieved a definite conception of English society as held together by...the potency of an incarnate and spiritual "idea"... (Murry 1939:110)

It was not only Coleridge to whom Murry acknowledges a debt. He also describes the work of Arnold, following Coleridge:

> ...Coleridge's thought fell on good ground in Arnold's mind, and grew into an original theory of English society. (Murry 1939:110)

In my view, this is the real worth of Murry's book, in introducing Coleridge to the scene. If Eliot had not already encountered Coleridge as social critic (he had already, of course, as literary critic), then Murry would have perhaps have awakened him to the possibility. It does not seem possible to say at this stage of Eliot studies whether Eliot had read On the Constitution of Church and State before Murry's 1938 book, although The Criterion did run a review of R White's The Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Selection, by George Every, in

Volume Eighteen, of October 1938.[52] The appearance of Murry's book and the review of what might be described as an otherwise unoriginal and derivative anthology perhaps shows that Eliot's mind was beginning to see the possibilities of Coleridge as a source of social ideas from *circa* 1938. The contemporary works that Eliot cites as influencing him in the writing of The Idea of a Christian Society are, I suggest, another smoke-screen to hide Eliot's tracks. We have already outlined in some depth Eliot's putative Hegelian leanings, and now we must examine another possible strand in his social, the Coleridgian. Whether this will discredit our initial thesis remains to be seen.

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[52] I have not been able to find any references in Eliot's published work to Coleridge's Church and State, other than those cited above. Nor have any of my fellow members of the T S Eliot Society whom I have canvassed.

Chapter Nine: Samuel Taylor Coleridge - "The Perfect Critic"

In the penultimate edition of The Criterion, of October 1938, Eliot gave space to a review of R J White's The Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Eliot always chose the books that were reviewed. His choice of this anthology was significant: it perhaps mirrored his own preoccupations with social thought at the time he was preparing the lectures which were to become The Idea of a Christian Society. The review, albeit only two pages long, by George Every SSM, is significant as a preface to what we must examine below.

Although Every is critical of White's selection of texts - it reduces, he writes, "...the *Lay Sermons* and the *Constitution of Church and State* to the condition of *disjecta membra*" (Every 1967:126) - he is able to make in passing some telling comments which are important for our study. He suggests that White is attempting to "...apologise for Coleridge's conservative sympathies in politics and religion" (Every 1967:127), tenets which we might apply to Eliot.[53] Every also raises the subject of German philosophy in his review. Although Every acknowledges that Coleridge used Kantian philosophy, it was only as a tool rather than a heart-felt ideal. "Kant", writes Every,

> was ammunition...in the attempt to get...behind Bentham and Locke... (Every 1967:128)

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[53] Scruton portrays Eliot as an "articulate conservative" in The Meaning of Conservatism (Scruton 1984:20).

But this use of Kant was only an expedient. Every suggests that Coleridge's "...Idealism was not Kant's":

> ...ideas are not simply forms whereby the mind orders the confused manifold of sense. The idea of the Church and the idea of the State are not unrealised political ideals, but principles which underlie...Church and of the State, though they can never be perfectly realised at any single moment... (Every 1967:128)

If Coleridge's Idealism was not Kant's then it was possibly Hegel's, although Every does not elaborate on this. It might perhaps be seen that Every's explanation of Coleridge's dynamic of ideas in history is broadly Hegelian in outline. This does not imply, of course, that Coleridge *was* actually Hegelian, only that Every puts an Hegelian kind of interpretation on Coleridge's ideas. Whatever the nature of Coleridge's Idealism, this review in some sense unwittingly describes the underlying philosophy of Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society. Eliot's "Idea" was indeed a principle rather than an "unrealised political ideal" - Eliot asserts that it is not a "blueprint" - and, as we will see below, he does not believe that it will be "perfectly realised at any single moment"; rather, it will be adapted to suit the particular situations in Christian cultures which desire to incarnate their faith in social organisation.

Every's article could not of course have informed all of Eliot's mind as to the nature of Coleridge's thought, but it can be seen to chime with some of Eliot's ideas. Eliot's knowledge of Coleridge was greater than a simple review or even the anthology which sparked it. Coleridge had a long and distinguished career in Eliot's mind before the appearance of this review. In the 1920 The Sacred Wood, Eliot was to describe Coleridge as "...perhaps the greatest of English critics, and in a sense the

last" (Eliot 1928b:1). Although this was referring specifically to his literary criticism, in examining more closely the ideas behind The Idea of a Christian Society, we might begin to see that it also referred to Coleridge's social criticism. In discussing Coleridge, we actually depart from our original intention in Part Three, that of looking at the named sources of inspiration in The Idea of a Christian Society. Coleridge's On the Constitution of Church and State, According to the Idea of Each does not appear alongside the works of Dawson, Demant, Maritain, and Murry in the opening pages of The Idea of a Christian Society. Its influence is, rather, hidden, although definitely there.

This influence is clearly seen in the paragraph in Eliot's book which is virtually a recapitulation of one in Coleridge. This paragraph is the key to understanding the methodology of The Idea of a Christian Society and aids the reader in understanding the concept of the book. Significantly, this debt to Coleridge is not acknowledged in the text nor by a marked foot-note, but rather by an end-note added in the published version of the lecture (Eliot 1982:83). We might be tempted to conclude that - at least at the moment when Eliot delivered his lectures - he wished his thought, derived from Coleridge, to be considered as his alone. The paragraph runs:

> In using the term "Idea" of a Christian Society I do not mean primarily a concept derived from the study of any societies which we may choose to call Christian: I mean something that can only be found in an understanding of the end to which a Christian Society…must be directed. I do not limit the application of the term to a perfected Christian Society on earth: and I do not comprehend in it societies merely because some profession of Christian faith…is retained. My concern with contemporary society will not be primarily with specific defects…but with the

> question, what - if any - is the "idea" of the society in which we live? to what end is it arranged?
> (Eliot 1982:43)

In the end-note to this paragraph, Eliot writes this:

> In using the term "Idea" I have of course had in mind the definition given by Coleridge [in his]...*Church and State*: "By an idea I mean (in this instance) that conception of a thing, which is not abstracted from any particular state, form or mode, in which the thing may happen to exist at this or that time; nor yet generalised from any number or succession of such forms or modes; but which is given by the knowledge of its ultimate aim."
> (Eliot 1982:83) [Eliot's Italics]

What both Eliot and Coleridge are saying is that they are not relying upon empirical thought or research in outlining their ideas, as for example did Aristotle who famously blended his theory of politics with research on over one hundred and thirty city constitutions in The Politics. The Englishmen's conception of the Christian Society is based on "pure" theory, unsullied by experience and based on teleology. Uncharacteristically, Eliot accurately quotes his source (except for a minor punctuation error[54]), which perhaps shows how seriously he took Coleridge's dictum. This would suggest that, when writing the end-note, he had Coleridge's book in front of him, something which, in the Clark Lectures, for instance, he was not used to doing, quoting from memory. In doing this, he not only put himself in the Platonic camp, but with aligning himself with Coleridge, he was putting himself in a firm tradition of English thought on constitutional matters. Coleridge's On the Constitution of Church and State was not the only work of the early to mid-

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[54] Eliot deletes the comma after Coleridge's "form" in the phrase "state, form, or mode".

nineteenth century which we might term Idealist in approach. Newman - influenced by Coleridge - continued the tradition with his 1852 Idea of a University. Eliot's work might be seen as a continuation of this tradition, albeit belatedly, just as certain critics see The Criterion as the last of the great Victorian literary journals (Tate 1967:358)[55]. Tradition was of course a crucial notion in Eliot's work, and to be able to link The Idea of a Christian Society with works by Coleridge and Newman would have been very satisfying. A further, stylistic link with the work of Coleridge might also be seen in the opening paragraphs of The Idea of a Christian Society, which again helps put Eliot in the tradition. Eliot suggests that he "...owe[s] a great deal to conversations with certain friends whose minds are engrossed by these and similar questions" (Eliot 1982:41). Coleridge, too, owed a debt to a friend over his own book:

> The occasion of this little work will be sufficiently explained by an extract from a letter addressed to me by a friend... (Coleridge 1884:xxiii)

Although the circumstances are clearly different - Coleridge's friend was concerned with Roman Catholic Emancipation - the introduction of a friend or friends to sharpen the mind of the English Man of Letters is too striking a similarity not to warrant comment. Perhaps Eliot is here claiming kinship with Coleridge, just as he may well have been doing in the 1920 essay The Perfect Critic - a title, we might hold, that Eliot himself was claiming a century after Coleridge.

There are several other points of similarity between the work of Coleridge

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[55] This is in Davies' essay "Mistah Kurtz: He Dead": "Eliot should certainly be remembered…as the last great periodical editor of the nineteenth century."

and Eliot. Both are ostensibly humble about their respective books. Coleridge, in the "Advertisement" for his volume, calls it "...this little work" (Coleridge 1884:xxiii), and Eliot is as self-deprecating when he suggests that The Idea of a Christian Society "...can have little importance by [itself]" (Eliot 1982:41). Again, perhaps, Eliot is planting himself in the English tradition.

This tradition, as explained above, was of tackling an issue through its guiding *idea*, or principle. Neither Eliot nor Coleridge were interested in being prescriptive about how the English constitutional system might be changed. Coleridge, according to his book, had considered a further part to the work which he would have called "What is to be done now?", but

> I have considered it more expedient that the content of this volume should be altogether in strict conformity with its title…[there shall be] no more and no other than ideas of the constitution in Church and State.
> (Coleridge 1884:xxv)

It was a hypothetical work, Coleridge desiring

> ...the friendly reader to bear in mind the distinction enforced in these pages, between the exhibition of an idea, and the way of acting on the same... (Coleridge 1884:42)

Eliot, it could be said, had exactly the same distinction in his mind when he wrote his work. He did not want it to lead to any kind of programme or movement. He is at pains to state that he does not want religious ferment to follow in its wake:

> I trust that the reader will understand from the beginning that this book does not make any plea for a "religious revival"... (Eliot 1982:42)

(The appeal to "the reader" - uncharacteristic in Eliot's work[56] - is yet another conscious link with Coleridge, who appeals to both "the friendly reader" and "the reader" in his book [Coleridge 1884:xxv,30].) In another place, Eliot again asserts that The Idea of a Christian Society is not a manifesto:

> I am not investigating the possible line of action by which such a Christian Society could be brought into being. I shall confine myself to a slight outline of ...[the] essential features of this society... (Eliot 1982:55)

Both Eliot and Coleridge operate in the realm of ideas. This is the background to the essential similarity between the two in the area of the two major divisions within society, on which their whole social theories rest. For both Coleridge and Eliot, the ability to grasp what Coleridge calls "the ultimate aim" of society - for Eliot, the "supernatural end" of society - is bound up in the ability of individuals to grasp and digest ideas per se. For Coleridge,

> ...this knowledge [i.e. of the "ultimate aim" of society]... may very well exist and powerfully influence a man's thought and actions, without his being distinctly conscious of the same...On the other hand, it is the privilege of the few to possess an idea: of the generality of men, it might be more truly affirmed that they are possessed by it. (Coleridge 1884:30-31)

This crucial distinction, we might think, is that which also lies at the heart of Eliot's division of society into the Christian Community and the Community of Christians. The former composed the mass of society, whose lifestyles were instinctive and unreflective. For these,

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[56] The only other such appeals I can find are in After Strange Gods, on p. 11, and the Preface to the 1943 Reunion by Destruction, both of which are highly polemical works.

> The religious life...would be largely a matter of behaviour and conformity... (Eliot 1982:62)

These persons would indeed be "possessed by" the idea of Christian living. Eliot's Community of Christians, on the other hand, would be those who are "consciously…practising Christians", akin to Coleridge's "privileged" few who "possess an idea". From the latter groups would develop Coleridge's "clerisy", and Eliot's "Community of Christians".

The role of ideas is crucial to both men's work. Church and State and The Idea of a Christian Society, by their titles, suggest this. Not only are they more interested in what we might term the theoretical side of politics than the practical, their insistence on the place of ideas reaches further than a mere love of intellectualisation of problems. Both come at their subjects, we might posit, from the Idealist standpoint, as outlined in Part One. For Coleridge, who spent years studying German Idealism, the Idea was king. This can be seen in his footnote to the following comment on the nature of a Constitution, "...a Constitution is an idea rising out of the idea of a State" (Coleridge 1884:34):

> ...for a constitution itself is an idea. This will sound like a paradox…for those with whom an idea is another word for a fancy…but not to those who in the ideas contemplate the most real of all realities… (Coleridge 1884:34, footnote)

He further enunciates his Idealist position in the main text of his work:

> ...we speak…of the idea itself, as actually existing, that is, as a principle existing in the only way in which a principle can exist - in the minds and consciences of the persons whose duties it prescribes...the Constitution has real existence…because it both is, and exists as, an idea. (Coleridge 1884:35)

Coleridge's Constitution, then, is a kind of shared idea, which has the force of a

shared faith, we might think. Being the driving force linking persons together, it is real, having power and influence. It is not a concept restricted to the minds of the population only, but links those minds with and indeed enables those minds to shape the world outside of mind, that is, society itself. Coleridge here, we might think, has an Idealist map of the power of ideas and the minds that form them. Mind creates reality; mind creates Constitutions, and, as we shall see later, those individual minds are linked by an even greater force or mind that drives the engine of history itself. To a degree, I suggest, this is what Eliot intends in The Idea of a Christian Society.

If one takes Eliot's notion of the Christian Society, and Coleridge's idea of the Constitution, we can see that they have similar shape and dynamics. For Coleridge, the Constitution was the over-arching principle which bound together people and their relationships in community. It was an Idea, but more than just a notion; it was a force. Eliot's Society has similar shape. Thought and ideas precede institutions. He introduces the matter of The Idea of a Christian Society with these words:

> ...what I am concerned with here is not...institutions in their separated aspect, but the organisation of values…
> (Eliot 1884:42)

Eliot starts with ideas - and he does not stray beyond them - and these it is which then form the systems of worldly action. It is important to see that Eliot hardly mentions the contemporary world at all in his book, except in the aspect of the threats to it from Totalitarian regimes, and these are discussed as ideas rather than political entities. Coleridge likewise has exiguous references to his own times. It could be put, however, that this concern with ideas does not necessarily mean that

Eliot or Coleridge is per se an Idealist when it comes to social and political thought. Books, after all, are about ideas, and cannot be about action by themselves. The work of Demant, Dawson, Maritain and even Murry can be described as being concerned with ideas and theory. However, there is a crucial distinction to be made here, which is grist for our thesis. Whereas all the other writers discussed in this chapter have the ultimate concern for putting their ideas into action, moving their arguments from their pages into political reality, Eliot, it seems, has no desire to form a programme, a movement, or even an influence. He does not appear to consider the realm of political action as important. Everything depends on the idea and the mind which will conceive his ideas as put forward in The Idea of a Christian Society. He does not approach the question of *The Practice* of a Christian Society, nor that of *How to Achieve* the same. Rather, he is solely concerned with expounding the *Idea*, that conception of society, which will fill men's minds. Eliot suggests this with his disclaimer,

> My concern with contemporary society...will not be primarily with specific defects...but with the question, what - if any - is the "idea" of the society in which we live? (Eliot 1982:43)

By achieving the right idea - and Eliot may be seen to suggest that he is using the word "idea" differently from normal usage by putting it into inverted commas - society will naturally fall into place around it. Ideas are reality; ideas have force and influence *by themselves.* It is by an idea that the Community of Christians is formed, and also the Christian Community (albeit subsumed into behaviour), and it is by the force of ideas and not arms that Fascism and Communism are perceived as a threat. The force of ideas had long impressed Eliot by the time he came to write

his 1939 lectures. In the 1916 thesis, he had written, in the context of an example of an idea found in literature:

> Becky Sharp exists in the time-order of Vanity Fair, but this time-order does not itself exist. Becky exists as an event in the life of Thackery, and as an event in the life of every reader in the same way that every real person exists…[she] is simply the identical reference of several points of view. (Eliot 1964:125)

Entities are real as far as they are *shared*. This might be considered as a fundamental factor in Eliot's insistence on the shared Christian nature of society. It is a system of shared ideas, beliefs. If it is so, then it is real, like Becky Sharp.

Despite their insistence on the power of ideas to form reality, neither Coleridge nor Eliot desire their works to be "blueprints" for any future society. Although this might be taken as an argument against the idealist view of things I have argued that both authors hold, in that if ideas have ultimate power then their implementation in the world would not be compromised, this should be seen rather as a refinement of an Idealist stance on society. In offering the "ideas" of Church, State, and Society, Eliot and Coleridge were outlining the basic principles, and not complete systems. These complete systems could be enlarged and expanded in differing ways whilst still keeping true to the fundamental ideas. Unity in principle did not necessarily mean uniformity. Coleridge takes great care in explaining how Church and State is not a detailed plan for action:

> We should be aware...that the particular form…that may best fit to render the idea [i.e. of the Constitution] intelligible…is not necessarily the…form in which it actually arrives at realisation…A naturalist...whose knowledge had been confined exclusively to the human frame...might have regarded the lungs as the only form in which this idea [of respiration]…was realisable. Ignorant

> of the function of the *spirncula* in insects, and of the gills of fish, he would, perhaps...degrade both to the class of non-respirants. (Coleridge 1884:35-36)

In other words, although insects, fish, and humans breathe differently, they are true examples of the general *idea* of respiration. The same went with societies. Eliot followed suit, offering not a "blue print" but a set of principles of the idea of a Christian Society which could be implemented anywhere according to local needs. His discussion of Christian Society "...involves [the] problem in its widest sense and in its most general interest" (Eliot 1982:45), and he acknowledged that Christian Society will take

> ...a different form according to the traditions of [each]...- Roman, Orthodox, or Lutheran. (Eliot 1982:69-70)

Each differing Christian nation would be free to "...develop a positive culture of [its] own" (Eliot 1982:69). For both Coleridge and Eliot, although the essence of the idea was the same, its implementation could follow a variety of forms.

This essential core of ideas Coleridge called "the principle of unity" within society:

> ...having the principle of unity within itself, whether by concentration of its forces, as a constitutional monarchy...or...by...the *lex equilibri*, the principle prescribing the means and conditions by and under which the balance is to be established and preserved, being the constitution of the State. (Coleridge 1884:37)

For Coleridge, the Principle of Unity within Britain, as he saw it, was the balance achieved between the "two orders" in society, which he called "...the agricultural or possessors of land; and the mercantile...and professional bodies" (Coleridge 1884:40) which ensured the "...permanence of the State" (Coleridge 1884:39). In

brief, he saw the former class (or classes - Coleridge would divide the "possessors of land" further into Major and Minor Barons) as providing the permanent stability of society, while the latter, being more recent, providing the engine for change which society needed. These seemingly opposing forces were to meet and be reconciled within the Parliamentary system

> ...secured by a legislature of two Houses; the first consisting wholly of barons…the second of the knights or minor barons, elected by...the remaining landed community, together with the burgesses, the representatives of the commercial, manufacturing, distributive, and professional classes. (Coleridge 1884:43)

In balancing society, the king played a crucial role:

> The King, meanwhile, in whom the executive power is vested, it will suffice at present to consider as the beam of the constitutional scale. (Coleridge 1884:43)

Coleridge's approach to understanding society, it must be said, is far from Eliot's.

For Coleridge, society - or at least landed and mercantile and professional society; he had little time for the labouring classes - could be neatly divided into precise groups, each having its legislative place in Parliament. And over all of them stood the King, a sort of arbiter figure. Coleridge was of his time, seeking to regulate and contain a burgeoning commercial society within an ancient landed order. Eliot, far removed from Coleridge's emergent modern Britain, has no such conception of society. He has no wish to classify people into landed or mercantile or professional classes. Indeed, he has no conception of England's ancient landed order at all.

Whereas Coleridge is basically aristocratic and rural in his view of Britain, Eliot is urban, despite his seemingly rural leanings. For Eliot, society's balance is not by legislative harmony between the interests of a few powerful groups, but rather by

doctrinal and ethical unity held by all strata of society.

There are, perhaps, several reasons why Eliot should have no apparent interest in political structures, unlike Coleridge. Principal amongst them were the apparent failures of the political system in the 1930's, as we saw above. Moreover, by 1939 Eliot had lost faith in what Coleridge saw as the balancing beam, of society - the Monarchy. The Abdication Crisis, and the role played in it by Parliament, to my mind robbed Eliot of a central plank in his political thought, from which it never truly recovered. There was a vacuum thereafter in his politics, and helps explain why he is so reticent over political forms in The Idea of a Christian Society. For Eliot, the figure of the King *should* have been pivotal, as it was for Coleridge. It might be argued that, without the Abdication Crisis, The Idea of a Christian Society would have been a very different book. Eliot might well have chosen to focus upon the monarch as focal point for society, while keeping his Christian Community/Community of Christians dynamic intact. Instead, Eliot was forced to abandon his belief in monarchy and, by the way the Crisis unfolded, the role of Parliament within society. In a sense, Eliot in The Idea of a Christian Society is radically democratic, appealing to the mass of the population (albeit in rather paternalistic terms) to take their roles seriously, rather than spending time on the institutions of State.

Yet despite these differences between Coleridge and Eliot, Eliot did subscribe to Coleridge's idea of a "principle of unity" within society. Eliot may not have gleaned this from Coleridge, of course, and such thinking may already have lain within Eliot's mind, but Eliot does in practice have this Coleridgian principle, albeit

in a different field. The Principle of Unity for Eliot, was not an institution or group of people, but a shared idea (as it was, really, for Coleridge). This idea united differing groups of people together. As he had written in Knowledge and Experience, as mentioned above, this unitive idea existed like the heroine Becky Sharp in Thackery's Vanity Fair, "...as an event in the life" of everyone who shared it, "...for it is...the identical reference of several points of view" (Eliot 1964:125). The idea was the Christian faith, both in its dogmatic and ethical character. The members of Eliot's Community of Christians were united by their shared doctrinal understanding, and the Christian Community by its Christian lifestyle. The shared idea formed society out of disparate groups of people. This dynamic of unity around an idea within Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society might be seen to be similar to that he explained in Knowledge and Experience, where he suggested that

> The idea is the total content which we mean about reality in any particular presentation...furthermore, its meaning partially coincides with the reality which it intends. Nor is the idea purely a logical entity, since it always, in the end, comes to occupy a place in a real world.
> (Eliot 1964:40)

And again,

> The idea is that reality which I intend, and the identity is only the assumption of *one* world; it is not the characteristic of it as idea, but as world.
> (Eliot 1964:43) [Eliot's Italics]

These extracts from Eliot's thesis might stand as a gloss on what he intended the "Idea" to be in the title of his 1939 work. It is not merely a conception or notion, and certainly not a blueprint. It is a reality which Eliot intended for England, and it encompassed *all* society - "the total content". The Idea did partially exist within

society as he saw it, and by articulating it Eliot sought to extend it. As intending reality, as occupying "...a particular place in a real world", Eliot's Idea of a Christian Society yoked together (the phrase is Eliot's) diverse groups into a whole.

The above might be seen to be an over-philosophical interpretation of The Idea of a Christian Society. There are two points at this juncture which may support the interpretation, however. First, there is a linguistic link between Eliot's 1939 book and the conclusion he drew in his thesis. Eliot, as we saw above, saw an idea not as a "purely a logical entity" but as something more substantial, "since it [i.e. the idea] always...comes to occupy a particular place in a real world." The Idea in Eliot's mind in 1939 being Christian Society, it is perhaps significant that he termed it *a* Christian Society, not *the* Christian Society. His Idea of it was definite - it was *the* Idea - but the Society he envisaged was, in his words, not intended for any specific incarnation, but one which could be adopted for any society. It was *the* Idea for *a* "real world", that is, a real society. This could be in Britain, the United States, or "the colonies". Although one might think that Eliot's title for his book is neither here nor there, I would suggest that he chose it very carefully indeed.

Second, such quest for unity around an idea may also be seen in Eliot's treatment of groups within society which did not share the Christian faith. Eliot's ostensibly anti-Semitic stance has been well explored in recent years, but the debate may well have been approached from the wrong angle. His putative anti-Semitism (and indeed his anti-minority stance) stems more perhaps from his philosophical quest for unity rather than his cultural or social mores. Despite decrying the

"...iniquity of usury" in The Idea of a Christian Society (Eliot 1982:61), Eliot's concern with Jewish groups is with their alternative belief systems rather than social differences. In After Strange Gods, for example, he suggests that "...reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews inadvisable" (Eliot 1934:11-12). It is these *free thinkers,* not other kinds of Jews, that Eliot does not desire, for by their rejection of their tradition they undermine society. In The Idea of a Christian Society Eliot's tone is softer, but the main thrust of the argument is still present. Although he can imagine "individuals" in society who "...remain blind, indifferent or even hostile" (Eliot 1982:68) to Christianity, these are surely automatically excluded from the Community of Christians because the Community is defined by its "...identity of beliefs and aspirations." (Eliot 1982:68) To introduce alternative - if not hostile - ideas into society would undermine the unity which a single idea would bring. Even if one subject did not share the common Christian beliefs, these could not be called truly common and the circle of unity would be broken. In Knowledge and Experience's terms, this would introduce another world into the picture and a potential dualism would be created. Eliot could not tolerate this, especially as he saw Fascism and Communism's strengths lying in their unity of doctrine.

Another similarity between the two authors is their anti-Industrialisation and pro-rural stance. Coleridge, placed as he was near the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, could see the dangers inherent in the nascent system of manufacture and employment. In a long list of ills of society, he observes:

> Then we have the…corn-laws, cotton factories, spittalfields…and the remainder of the population

> mechanised into engines for the manufacturing of new rich men… (Coleridge 1884:64)

As we saw above, this concern with the ills of the industrial process was still evident in Eliot's day. Interestingly, Coleridge lay the blame for this sea-change in English society at the door of Eliot's bugbear, Hobbes. Philosophers such as Hobbes, suggests Coleridge, in developing a mechanistic philosophy, paved the way for a mechanistic way of life:

> The mechanico-corpuscular theory [they] raised to the title of the mechanic philosophy, and [it was] espoused in philosophy by the actors of the so-called Revolution in the State. (Coleridge 1884:64)

Coleridge would surely have acquiesced in Eliot's comment that Hobbes had developed "...a particularly lamentable theory of the relation between Church and State." (Eliot 1970g:33) Moreover, Eliot saw in Hobbes the seeds of Totalitarian government (which perhaps correlates with Coleridge's "Revolution in the State", if he had in mind the French Terror), when he suggested that "...materialistic determinism [which Eliot traced to Hobbes] and absolutist government fits into the same scheme of life" (Eliot 1970g:33).

Industrialisation had a disastrous effect upon the rural life of England, according to both authors. For Eliot, it laid waste tracts of countryside; for Coleridge - more subtle here - it threatened the land by denuding it of agricultural labourers to till it. Both writers have a somewhat rural society in mind when they describe their ideal societies, although as we saw above, Eliot's two-community division in society is essentially urban. Moreover, both placed the parish system at the heart of the grand picture of England. This is such an unusual way of looking at

society that I suggest that Eliot could surely only have received the idea from Coleridge. Coleridge sees the parish unit as the place for society's revitalisation. The "Nationality", as he termed the life-force of the nation, was to be properly maintained and promoted by three particular means:

> ...1, [in] the universities and the great schools of liberal learning; 2, [by] a pastor...in every parish; 3, [by] a schoolmaster in every parish, who in due time should proceed to the pastorate...working to the same end...namely, the production and reproduction, the preservation, continuance, and perfection, of the necessary sources and condition of national civilisation...
> (Coleridge 1884:57)

These members of the clerisy - and most would be clergymen, in Coleridge's scheme of things, especially when one considers that University teachers in Coleridge's day were clergymen - would form a nucleus of culture in every parish in the land. Around these men, presumably, the rest of the population would gather in order to be instructed in the nation's culture. This would happen in two ways, first, in schooling and also through the parish church. It is worth noting here that Coleridge does not seem to envisage a role for Dissenting Churches (which did not operate on a parish basis, which was a peculiarly Anglican system) nor other religious groups. His system appears remarkably ecclesiastical and indeed clerical. Eliot's Community of Christians is also highly clericalised. Although there is not so obviously a clerical bias as in Coleridge, Eliot's community was described as "...consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual authority" (Eliot 1982:62). Although these criteria are not a clerical monopoly, it might be felt that this group would include more clerical than lay members. And although Eliot does not restrict the Community of

Christians to a specific geographical base, in his scheme of the parishes as the fundamental "community unit" in which people would have their entire lives, in effect they would be parochially based. Eliot is at pains in The Idea of a Christian Society to define his Community of Christians against Coleridge's Clerisy. He believed that his "...'Community of Christians' is somewhat different" (Eliot 1982:36). Yet the reasons he gives for these differences are somewhat spurious. He suggests that Coleridge's insistence on Christian education by Christian teachers "can no longer be taken for granted", and in future in schools "the personnel will inevitably be mixed". Eliot's points are perhaps disingenuous. In suggesting that the existence of Christian teachers cannot be taken for granted, he is in fact straying beyond the methodological limits of The Idea of a Christian Society, which purports not to be a critique of existing structures. The comment is strangely out of synchronisation with the rest of the book, which has few other comments on existing systems. In fact, in Eliot's day the vast majority of teachers would have called themselves Christians, one would suspect, especially given the number who would have been trained in Church of England colleges. Moreover, Eliot in his book insists that the education system would have to teach Christianity as the national culture, so the teacher's belief or not would have little relevance. As this is the only point of departure from Coleridge's Clerisy that Eliot gives, the difference between the two can be seen as little.

Why, then, should Eliot have tried to distance himself from Coleridge, especially given that the works can be seen to stand in a solid English tradition of thought? Perhaps the most important reason was Coleridge's somewhat unorthodox

position in English letters. Since his own day, he

> ...has been variously criticised as a political turn-coat, a drug addict, a plagiarist, and a mystic humbug...a great progenitor of the English Romantic spirit...
> (Drabble 1984:212)

To Eliot he was not totally salubrious, especially as he represented the Romantic tradition in English letters, over which Eliot had grave reservations. Therefore he could not be seen to be too close to his nineteenth century predecessor. As a Broad Churchman, too - although the title is somewhat anachronistic - Coleridge was poles apart from Eliot. His belief in the necessity of Christian re-unification would have been unacceptable to Eliot, who saw such moves as a dilution in orthodoxy in participant Churches and reunion, as the title of his 1943 pamphlet on the reunion of the Indian Churches shows, as a means of destruction.

Eliot may also have wished to distance himself from Coleridge over other matters. We have seen above how Coleridge stressed the importance of Parliament in the body politic, which suggests that at heart he was a democrat. Eliot would have had no time for this particular leaning. Coleridge's conception of the State, deriving from its structure, was also antipathetical to Eliot. To Coleridge, the term State had two meanings:

> ...in one sense...the State as a whole and comprehending the Church...[and] the State as one of the two constituent parts... (Coleridge 1884:94-95)

Although Eliot in The Idea of a Christian Society proclaimed himself as not being interested in matters of Church and State (thereby another difference with Coleridge, this time methodological), one cannot but help think that Coleridge's definition of State would not have found favour with Eliot. Moreover, Coleridge

wished to see the State as synonymous with "...a constituted realm, kingdom, commonwealth or nation..." (Coleridge 1884:95). Eliot could not see England as such a phenomenon. Although it might be said that Coleridge's term State was in its broader meaning the same as Eliot's "Society", it is perhaps differently nuanced. For Eliot, Christian Society was made from the ground (or, rather, parish) upwards. In describing it he had no need nor indeed time for describing either State apparatus nor ecclesiastical systems. It was, as hinted above, a radically popular entity, founded solely on people and their belief systems. In other words, in Eliot's view of fundamental society as contained in The Idea of a Christian Society, there is little or no role either offered or indicated for institutions. In Coleridge, there is. Institutions form the balance for the whole system. Church and State (in its lesser role) cooperate but also restrain, as do Parliament and King. Although Coleridge does spend considerable time in outlining his clerisy, which was to be spread amongst the people, he is not actually concerned with what in Eliot would be the "Christian Community".

There is also a massive difference between the two over the role of the Church. At one level, Coleridge's vision of the Church does not appear much different from Eliot's or indeed many other mainstream ecclesiologies of the Reformed traditions. He suggests that the Christian Church

> ...is not a kingdom...of the world...it is the appointed opposite to [it]…the…correcting, befriending opposite of the world...whatever is beneficent and humanising in the aims…of the State, the Church collects itself as in a *focus*, to radiate them back in a higher quality...And for these services the Church…asks of the State neither ways nor dignities. (Coleridge 1884:98) [Coleridge's Italics]

Although this definition is hardly controversial, there are other facets of Coleridge's thought that would not have found favour with Eliot. Although Coleridge is in favour of a "National Church" - and here he picks up a phrase from the Book of Common Prayer, and so is not being radical at least in his terminology - which is legally safe from "...any measure subverting or tending to subvert [its] safety and independence" (Coleridge 1884:77), he does not believe that this National Church necessarily must be Christian. Ultimately, the National Church is more important for the *role* it plays within society rather than its claim to truth. Coleridge observes that

> In relation to the National Church, Christianity…is a blessed accident, a providential boon...Christianity [is]...no essential part of the being of the National Church...a National Church might exist, and has existed, without...the Christian Church; - as the Levitical Church in the Hebrew Constitution…would suffice to prove.
> (Coleridge 1884:59)

The religion of the National Church, so it seems, can be virtually anything. Eliot could not have agreed to this. Moreover, Coleridge sees the National Church - that is, the religious life and institutions of the nation - in England having been through bad periods. Its Christianity was not always such of a "boon", for it had suffered much in

> ...the dark age of Queen Elizabeth, in the unenlightened times of Burleigh, Hooker…and Lord Bacon...
> (Coleridge 1884:63)

Eliot may well have disagreed. Under Hooker, for example, Eliot saw the Church of England almost at its apogee, his achievement alongside his contemporary Andrewes immense:

> The intellectual achievement and the prose style of Hooker and Andrewes came to complete the structure of the English Church as the philosophy of the thirteenth century crowns the Catholic Church. (Eliot 1970a:18)

Any description of Hooker as part of the obfuscation of the Church would be diametrically opposed to Eliot's, who would rank Hooker alongside Aquinas.

Such a difference in views can also be seen in the writers' approach to the constitution of their "clerisies". For Coleridge, the clerisy is a broad group of people. It had a long history, and although Coleridge thought it had fallen into desuetude, its historical parameters were those with which it should be reconstituted:

> The Clerisy of the nation...in its…original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations...in short, all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilisation of a country... (Coleridge 1884:53)

Although there is a stress on theology in Coleridge's scheme, as there is in Eliot's, the two are somewhat different. For Coleridge, although membership of the clerisy is open to all denominations and sects, in practice membership is open only to those of the Protestant and Reformed traditions:

> The [members of the] Clerisy...shall be fully…citizens of the State, neither acknowledging the authority, nor within the influence, of any other State in the world…and in no capacity…pretences, owning any other earthly sovereign or visible head but the King. (Coleridge 1884:72)[57]

Eliot's Community of Christians, however, has no denominational boundaries. And

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[57] In 1830, the Pope was not just a spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church, but also the ruler of an Italian State, the Papal States. This region had its own administration and army, and so Coleridge's reference to "other States" also refers to the Pope.

whereas Coleridge puts the membership criterion firmly on intellectual prowess,

Eliot also has a spiritual orientation, as we saw above:

> ...[the members of the Community of Christians] will be the consciously and thoughtful practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual authority. (Eliot 1982:62)

Coleridge's Clerisy might appear to be the learned who just happen to be Christian, whereas Eliot's are what might be called visceral Christians, whose faith permeates their whole being. Moreover, Coleridge's Clerisy is a more institutional group than Eliot's. The latter's Community of Christians is a collection of people "...nebulous in outline", not forming

> ...local groups, and not the Church in any one of its senses, unless we call it "the Church within the Church". (Eliot 1982:62)

Coleridge, on the other hand, suggests that the Clerisy are

> ...members of the permanent learned class...planted throughout the realm...the immediate agents and instruments in the great and indispensable work of perpetuating…[the] civilisation of the nation...entitled to remain its trustees and usufructuary proprietors. (Coleridge 1982:56)

Moreover, Coleridge is moved to say that

> ...I hold it a disgrace and calamity of a professed statesman not to know…that a permanent, nationalised, learned order, a national Clerisy...is an essential element of a rightly constituted nation... (Coleridge 1884:66)

That they are "planted", and have the usufruct of the nation makes these members of the clerisy very much to appear like the parochial clergy of England. Presumably, they were "planted" by someone or institution, and that Coleridge wants a member of the Clerisy in "every parish" would suggest that this is the case. Perhaps

Coleridge is here arguing in an oblique way for a professionally trained clergy. There was a movement for this within the Anglican Church at the same time as Coleridge published Church and State, in 1830. Both lines of thought were perhaps provoked by the increased freedom of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, which could boast a properly trained priesthood. Overall, Coleridge's clerisy is more institutional and less broad-based than Eliot's Community of Christians, although its *raison d'être* is very similar.

Eliot's debt to Coleridge is great. Not only do they appear similar in their use of ideas as forces within society, but the role of the land itself, their treatment of non-Christian inhabitants and the place of a specialised Christian elite put them in the same kind of English tradition.

At this juncture we must turn our attention to another scholar who has identified Coleridge as a predecessor to Eliot, and see to what conclusions he arrived. Kojecky, whose 1971 T S Eliot's Social Criticism remains the only full-length study on the subject, suggests that

> Coleridge appears at important places in Eliot's social writing. The "idea" in *The Idea of a Christian Society* was as much Coleridge's as Plato's, and the "clerisy", a term coined by Coleridge, was fertile in the ground of Eliot's thought. (Kojecky 1971:19)

Kojecky traces both men's origins in Unitarianism, as well as their philosophical and literary similarities. He briefly traces the outline of argument concerning the clerisy in Church and State (he does not, alas, ever give its full title, losing an invaluable link between it and Eliot), and suggests in general terms the correlation with Eliot's book. He does not, however, discuss Coleridge's theory of ideas, nor

that of Eliot, and does not in depth discuss the role of the land, Church or State in Church and State. Kojecky' discussion, although important, runs to only six pages, and his conclusion that

> Both he [i.e. Eliot] and Coleridge looked to historically sanctioned institutions and to constitutional forms for national Christian renewal. (Kojecky 1971:24-25)

may be disputed: ostensibly, neither Coleridge's clerisy nor Eliot's Community of Christians has a real historical basis. Moreover, Eliot wished for more than a "Christian renewal": it was a renewal in Christian *society*, the broader meaning of which Kojecky does not appear here to recognise, restricting it to a more personal level.

Given the role of Coleridge in The Idea of a Christian Society, do we therefore need to look further in the search for influences over Eliot's social thought? It might be contended that we already have a rich harvest in our searches so far, which puts Eliot in a tradition alongside Coleridge and Newman. Therein lies a clue to our further studies: from where did this tradition come? Eliot, as well as Coleridge and indeed Newman (in following Coleridge; Newman knew no German) were perhaps drawing on a deeper foundation of thought than their own. This is to be found within German philosophy.

Coleridge may again provide a bridge for Eliot to German Idealism, although as we saw in Part One Eliot was already well acquainted with it. It is sometimes argued that Coleridge is Kantian. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church states that Coleridge in 1798 "...went to Germany to study the Kantian philosophy" (Cross and Livingstone 1983:312). A more modern study, Bywater's 1997 Samuel

Taylor Coleridge, suggests that, *a propos* of the perceiving mind,

> We saw such an ideal of perception to be already implicit in [the poem] "The Lime Tree Bower"; later, under the influence of Kant, Coleridge works out this implication in some detail. (Bywater 1997:17)

However, Coleridge's thought, it can be argued, at least within On the Constitution of the Church and State, is more like Hegel's than Kant's. This suggestion is, I realise, a bold one to make in the face of recent Coleridge studies, where the name of Hegel hardly makes an appearance. Current thinking - Bywater excepted - is that Coleridge drew upon the post-Kantian work of such thinkers as Schelling and both the Schlegels as well as that of Kant himself, and as Hamilton suggests, when he returned to England from his German sojourn in 1798, although he

> …does not let himself be swallowed entire by post-Kantianism…[he] takes with him a host of religious animists [as Hamilton describes them] with whom to build a critical emplacement within the idealist promised land. (Hamilton 2002:172)

Hegel, it seems, does not figure in this list of post-Kantians, and nor does he in the studies of Coleridge's philosophy or politics such as those by of Morrow (1996), Kitson (2002) and Colmer (1959).

However, there is incontrovertible evidence that Coleridge knew and strong evidence to suggest that he also assimilated Hegel's work. In the Coleridge Collection in the British Library is his copy of Hegel's 1812 Wissenschaft der Logik, which Coleridge annotated throughout its first ninety pages (Muirhead 1930:270). Although it appears that only Muirhead in his 1930 study Coleridge as Philosopher notices this and sees it as important, this seems to me to be crucial, at least for our study. Firstly, it shows us that Coleridge, long after his return from his

German tour (on which it is extremely unlikely that he met Hegel, on examination of his itinerary in Holmes' Coleridge: Early Visions and comparing it with Hegel's whereabouts in 1798 as recorded in Pinkard's Hegel: A Biography) was acquiring the texts of the latest German philosophy, and if this was so of Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik it may well have been true of his other works, which have been considered above. (That they do not survive in the Coleridge archive is not evidence that they never existed for Coleridge). And secondly, in examining a little of Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik (or, at least in an English translation, known as The Encyclopaedia Logic), we see, I suggest, that some of Coleridge's thought changes after he reads it.

As this appears to be a new idea in Coleridge studies, and is important to our own here, this is worth examining. Before reading Hegel's Logik, Coleridge's theory of ideas appears to be Platonist. In the Biographia Literaria, for example, he defines "idea" in the following way:

> The word Ιδεα [Idea], in its original sense…represented the visual abstraction of a distant object…Plato adopted it as a technical term…The ideas themselves he considered as mysterious powers…exempt from time…
> (Coleridge 1985:209, fn)

Throughout Biographia Literaria, Coleridge uses "idea" in this Platonic sense, as a thing distant from the world. For example:

> Essence…means the principle of individuation…It is equivalent to the idea of a thing, whenever we use the word idea with philosophic precision. Existence, on the other hand, is distinguished from essence, by the superinduction of reality. (Coleridge 1985:348)

Ideas, for Coleridge here, are not part of reality. In Hegel's Logik, Coleridge

would have come across a very different notion of idea, which we have examined at some length in Part Two. In describing idea, Hegel suggests that

> The Idea is what is true *in and for itself, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity.* Its ideal content is nothing but the Concept in its determinations; its real content is only the presentation that the Concept gives itself in the form of external thereness [sic]...
> (Hegel 1991C:286) [Hegel's Italics]

An idea is therefore the objective existence of a concept, its incarnation. This is far removed from the Platonist position that Coleridge holds in his earlier career, and it can be demonstrated that he adopts it consciously in his later writings. His definition of the "Idea" of the constitution of a state has already been quoted, and it is couched in Hegelian terms, *a la* the definition he would have encountered in his reading of Hegel's Logik.

There are several other pieces of evidence for the conclusion that Coleridge adopts Hegelian lines of thought in his own writings. Both Coleridge and Hegel, for example, give space to the notion of a grand force in human history which influences its progress. For Hegel this was called *Geist*, and was clearly charted in the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Coleridge, without actually giving this entity or force a name, likewise gives credence to such a phenomenon. In his comments on the expansion of the rule of law in Church and State, Coleridge suggests that

> My assertion is simply this, that its formation has advanced in this direction. The line of evolution, however sinuous, has still tended to this point, sometimes with, sometimes without, not seldom, perhaps, against, the intention of the individual actors, just always as if a power, greater and better than the men themselves, had intended it for them. (Coleridge 1884:43)

Moreover, Coleridge has the same scientific interest in history as did Hegel:

> The reading of history may dispose a man to satire; but the science of history…as the great drama of an ever-unfolding Providence, has a very different effect. It influences hope and the reverential thought of man and his destination. (Coleridge 1884:44)

Another Hegelian twist in Coleridge's thought is the concern for the alienation of property. In Coleridge's historical survey of the pre-Reformation period, he suggests that

> ...large masses were *alienated* from the heritable properties of the realm...under the common name of Church property…Had every rood, every stone...been re-transferred and made heritable at the Reformation, no right would have been invaded… (Coleridge 1884:56) [my Italics]

In combating this alienation, argues Coleridge, Henry VIII's name

> ...would have outshone that of Alfred if he had availed himself of the wealth and landed masses that had been unconstitutionally *alienated* from the State, namely, transferred from the scale of heritable lands and revenues, to purchase, and win back whatever had been *alienated* from the opposite scale of the Nationality...
> (Coleridge 1884:56-57) [my Italics]

This attitude, it can be argued, can be linked with that of Hegel. For him, property embodied the person and will of the owner, and could only be given up by the freewill of the same:

> It is possible for me to *alienate* my property, for it is mine only in so far as I embody my will in it. Thus I may abandon as ownerless anything belonging to me...only in so far as the thing is *external in nature*.
> (Hegel 1991b:95) [Hegel's Italics]

Hegel's idea of inalienable property and Coleridge's alienated land seem to be very similar. Coleridge, it might be put, believed that the Nationality (a kind of "national

spirit") had been robbed of its force by the pre-Reformation Church, which sequestered property and labour for its own ends, and while doing so served a foreign power, the Pope. These properties should have been restored to the nation at the Reformation, but Henry VIII had failed to undo the knots of alienation. This had led to an unbalanced constitution.

The figure of the king is also similar in both Coleridge and Hegel. We have identified Coleridge's idea that the king was a "visible head" of State, the beam of balance between the chambers of Parliament (Coleridge 1884:72). Hegel, an admirer of the English Constitution, held the same kind of notions about the monarch. The king was, according to his German Constitution, a balancing mechanism in society:

> The State requires a universal centre - a monarch, and Estates - in which the various powers…are united, a centre which not only directs but also has the necessary power to assert itself and its resolutions. (Hegel 1964a:12)

Hegel's monarch was also a symbol of unity:

> Political authority must be concentrated in one centre...If popular respect ensures that this centre is secure in itself and immutably sanctified in the person of the monarch...every estate, city, etc. can enjoy the freedom to do and implement for itself what lies within its province. (Hegel 1964a:21)

Further correlations might be found between Hegel and Coleridge in their uses of the terms *fancy* and *imagination* (the Hegel scholar Knox suggests this in his 1975 translation of Hegel's Aesthetics, p. 5), their absolutely high regard of Shakespeare, their use of the term Universal, and many other subjects. Muirhead sums up the meaning of these convergences with the comment

> …the coincidence [between Coleridge and Hegel]…is sufficiently remarkable and tempts one to imagine that there was something in the deeper spirit of the time which it was given to these two writers…to seize upon and express. (Muirhead 1930:88)

It would seem, therefore, that there is a solid argument, albeit in the seeming face of current scholarship, to suggest that Coleridge had a definite Hegelian root to some at least of his thinking. The same we have been arguing for Eliot, and if we accept even in little this line of reasoning, then we have a solid English tradition formed between Coleridge and Eliot, with Newman in between as a side-branch from Coleridge.

This discovery - if discovery it is - might then lead us to question further the strictly Hegelian origins of Eliot's political thought: he might have conceivably (as Kojecky argues) received all his Hegelian thought via the mediating mind of Coleridge. However, we can dismiss this idea easily, by reminding ourselves of the evidence presented in Part Two, that Eliot knew many of Hegel's works (in English translation) at first hand and their assimilation and indeed direct quotation can be found in his works. Eliot in fact appears *more* Hegelian than Coleridge. In conclusion to this section on Coleridge, it might be seen that Eliot did not need him to be a mediator of Hegel's ideas, but Coleridge's assimilation of them into the mainstream (albeit Romantic, although in Coleridge Eliot's antipathy to Romanticism is muted; Coleridge is the "perfect critic", after all) English tradition gave Eliot the authority to use them in his own writings, and in parts to dress them in Coleridgian clothes to give them extra weight and to hide their German origins, which at the time of Eliot's writings would have been detrimental, as we saw in

Part Two. The body of the ideas, however, for Eliot as well as Coleridge, was that of Hegel.

A Conclusion

This essay offers a new interpretation of Eliot. It shows that a number of his works were influenced to a noticeable degree by the Hegelian philosophy that he had encountered as a student. We know that Eliot annotated Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. It can also be demonstrated that he knew several of Hegel's works, including Natural Law, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, The German Constitution and Philosophy of Right. Words and phrases from these books (in English translation) occur in several places in Eliot's poetry, particularly Four Quartets. Within East Coker especially there resides a close poetic rendering of an Hegelian vision of rural society. Both authors have an abiding interest in the soil; the roots of this surely lie in Herder's theory of *Volk.*

At 6:13 we noted the major differences and similarities between Eliot and Hegel. Hegel's *Geist*, his "Idea" of Freedom, and his theory of evolving history found no real correlation in Eliot's social and political thought, although they did in his literary criticism - Eliot's concept of the "European mind" may have a ghost of an Hegelian *Geist* to it, as well as the theory of the developing Tradition.

At this juncture we might summarise the echoes of Hegel to be found in Eliot's criticism. These are especially clear in the essays contained in the 1928 For Lancelot Andrewes. Eliot disavows Hobbes in a strikingly similar phrase to one used by Hegel in a parallel attack. Above all, Machiavelli occupies precisely the same position in Eliot as he does in Hegel. Eliot's essay "Nicolo Machiavelli" is virtually a

recapitulation of Hegel's earlier comments on Machiavelli as contained in "The German Constitution". Eliot in 1928 appears - in two essays at least - in Hegelian guise, and it is notable that he does this in a landmark collection which saw him appear in the world in his new and true colours, as an Anglican, royalist and classicist. Hegel appears very close to the heart of the true Eliot, at least in 1928.

1928 marks a kind of watershed for Eliot. In the years following, his concerns became much broader. Literature, he saw, had an impact in society. Bad literature made bad society; this was the thrust of the 1934 After Strange Gods. The Criterion became more concerned with politics, sociology and economics in the years after 1928. Eliot joined The Chandos Group and The Moot, although it could hardly be said that Eliot was ever a political activist. The whole process of Eliot's increasing engagement with the regulation and the future of society came to a head in our central text for this study, The Idea of a Christian Society.

Whereas For Lancelot Andrewes contains easily recognisable Hegelian elements, those of The Idea of a Christian Society are well concealed. I have not been able to extrapolate Hegelian phrases or words from the text, as for the 1928 book. It is likely that Eliot took pains to conceal the Hegelianism which he had let freely flow some eleven years earlier. Why should he have done this? It was surely not because of his alleged rejection of Hegel, as we saw in Part Three. The reason, I suggest, lies in the political developments of the 1930's in continental Europe. The rise of German Fascism, and the increasing influence on the British intellectual scene of Soviet Communism, could both be traced in some part to the figure of Hegel. Marx drew his inspiration direct from Hegel, and Lenin from Marx, and so it could be claimed that

Soviet Russia was a child of Hegel, or at least those who claimed to be his followers. German Fascism, with its quasi-religious belief in the *Volk* and the German homeland, could also trace precedence to Hegel's door, although in a much less intellectually rigorous way. Eliot, who always asseverated his objections to both Fascism and Communism, believing them to be pagan, would have been acutely aware that both movements owed much to Hegel, twisted though their Hegelianism was. In writing The Idea of a Christian Society, any reference to Hegel, or any Hegelian sounding phrase, might well have been seen to deflate Eliot's cause. Instead, he attempted to place his 1939 book in the English tradition, with references to Coleridge, and also Dawson, et al. His inclusion of Maritain (straw man though he was) was perhaps a way of linking this Englishness to the European mind - and a French version of it at that - something Eliot was always anxious to do for such figures as Andrewes and Hooker. Eliot's attempt at concealing his Hegelian tone has, it must be admitted, been very successful; this study is the first to even suggest it, let alone argue for it in an extensive manner. But it should be noted that, at the very same period when Eliot was writing The Idea of a Christian Society, he was deeply immersed in (arguably) his greatest poetical work, Four Quartets, which as we have seen contain a number of Hegelian phrases and even arguments. Here we might have stumbled across a difference in the creative powers of Eliot's mind. His prose works, perhaps, were drawn from a more *conscious*, more overtly *reasoning* level of his mind, where he could identify different strands of his own thought and then disguise them if necessary. His poetry, on the other hand, perhaps came from another (one dare not say *deeper*), less reflective level, into which phrases and words and indeed whole

lines of argument encountered before could arise and be expressed. This can only be a suggestion as there is no way properly to ascertain this, although one of Eliot's marginal annotations to the Lectures may help us here, in suggesting that "Prose requires greater self-consciousness than poetry" (Sibree 1905:169). Overall, I would suggest that many of the ideas that Eliot produces in The Idea of a Christian Society, and those in many of his other works, come from his early reading in Hegel, and that - in the words of Little Gidding, which perhaps are a postscript for *all* Eliot's work -

> the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started (Eliot 1969:197)

although, in the case of his social thought, this arrival was not to "Know the place for the first time" (Eliot 1969:197). That place he had known at least as early as 1911 in his days of lodging in Apley Court, and that place, I suggest, he revisited time and again.

Appendix 1 -

T S Eliot's annotations in his copy of Sibree's translation of G W F Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History

There are several classes of underlining and marginal scoring made by Eliot in the book. There is the simple horizontal line under the lines of texts themselves (Appendix 1a). There is the single vertical line by the side of longer passages (Appendix 1b). There is a double vertical line marking (Appendix 1c), and the multiple line marking (Appendix 1d). Then there are the marginal notes themselves (Appendix 1e). Whether Eliot implied, by the number of markings, a hierarchy of importance in these highlighted texts, it is difficult to say but it is tempting to suggest that the more he marked a page the more it meant to him.

In studying the marginal notes and underlinings, they will be given in Italic type to distinguish them from any accompanying commentary. Where words appear Italicised in the original, these are given in normal type in the extracts. Where vertical lines by the side of the text do not follow precisely sentence breaks, but overlap other sentences, the complete sentences are given.

Fly-leaf notes

There are several notes written by Eliot on the fly-leaf, and these have been commented on before, notably Lyndall Gordon and Peter Ackroyd. They introduce us to some of Eliot's grand themes which would occupy him for many years to come, notably in Four Quartets. Presumably they were instigated by Eliot's reading of the Lectures. They are as follows:

What is Reason?

God as the ultimate Abstraction? Time?

Is there any present reconciliation between ourselves and the past?

The past exists to us as present.

Can we argue about anything but the present?

Have we <u>anything</u> but the present?

Textual Notes

p. ix. (from Sibree's Introduction) single line by the side of:

The successive phases which humanity has assumed in passing from that primitive state of bondage to this condition of Rational Freedom forms the chief subject of the following lectures.

p. 2. Double vertical line by the side of

It is short periods of time, individual shapes of persons and occurrences, single, unreflected traits, of which he [i.e. the ancient historian such as Herodotus] *makes his picture. And his aim is nothing more than the presentation to posterity of a image of events as clear as that which he himself possessed in virtue of personal observations, or life-like descriptions.*

p. 3. Double vertical line by the side of

These historians, whom we must make thoroughly our own, with whom we must linger long, if we would live with their respective nations, and enter deeply into their spirit: of these historians, to whose pages we turn not for the purposes of erudition merely, but with a view to deep and genuine enjoyment, there are fewer than might be imagined.

p.4 Underlining of

The workman approaches his task with his own spirit.

p. 6 Underlining of

Amid the pressure of great events, a general principle gives no help.

p. 7 Single vertical line by the side of

The French, on the other hand, display great genius in reanimating bygone times, and in bringing the past to bear upon the present condition of things.

p. 11 Underlining of

It is only an inference from the history of the World, that its development has been a rational process.

and

[We must proceed historically -] empirically.

and

To him who looks upon the world rationally, the world in its turn, presents a rational aspect. The relation is mutual.

p. 17 Single vertical line by the side of

We have therefore to mention here:
1. The abstract characteristics of the nature of Spirit.
2. What means Spirit uses in order to realise its Idea.
3. Lastly, we must consider the shape which the perfect embodiment of Spirit assumes - the State.

p. 24 Single vertical line by the side of

Nothing therefore happens, nothing is accomplished, unless the individuals concerned, seek their own satisfaction in the issue. They are particular units in society.

and

We assert then that nothing has been accomplished without interest in the part of the actors; and - if interest be called passion, in as much as the whole individuality, to the neglect of all other actual or possible interests and claims, is devoted to an object with every fibre of volition, concentrating all its desires and powers upon it - we may affirm that nothing great in the World has been accomplished without passion.

and following from this

I mean here nothing more than human activity as resulting from private interests - special, or if you will, self-seeking designs.

p. 25 Single vertical line by the side of

I shall therefore use the term "passion"; understanding thereby the particular bent of character, as far as the peculiarities of volition are not limited to private interest, but supply the impelling and actuating force for accomplishing deeds shared in by the community at large.

p. 28 Single vertical line by the side of

Thus the passions of men are gratified; they develop themselves and their aims in accordance with their natural tendencies, and build up the edifice of human society; thus fortifying a position for Right and Order against themselves.

p. 29 Single vertical line by the side of

By this example I wish only to impress on you the consideration, that in a simple act, something farther may be implicated than lies in the intention and consciousness of the agent.

p. 31 Single vertical line by the side of

Such are all great historical men, - whose own particular aims involve those large issues which are the will of the World-Spirit. They may be called Heroes, in as much as they have derived their purposes and their vocation, not from the calm

regular course of things, sanctioned by the existing order; but from a concealed fount - one which has not attained to phenomenal, present existence, - from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which, impinging on the outer world as on a shell, bursts it in pieces, because it is another kernel than that which belonged to the shell in question.

p. 34 Single vertical line by the side of

A World-historical individual is not so unwise as to indulge a variety of wishes to divide his regards. He is devoted to the one Aim, regardless of all else.

p. 37 Double vertical lines by the side of

It is easier to discover a deficiency in individuals, in states, and in Providence, than to see their real import and value.

pp. 40-41 Single and then double vertical lines, and marginal note "The State", by the side of

For it must be understood that this latter [i.e. the State] *is the realisation of Freedom, i.e. of the absolute final aim, and that it exists for its own sake. It must further be understood that all the worth which the human being possesses - all spiritual reality, he possesses through the State. For his spiritual reality consists in this, that his own essence - Reason - is objectively present to him, that it possesses objective immediate existence for him. Thus only is he fully conscious; thus only is he a partaker of morality - of a just and moral social and political life.*

p. 43 Single vertical line by the side of

The perpetually recurring misapprehension of Freedom consists in regarding that term only in its formal, *subjective sense, abstracted from its essential objects and aims; thus a constraint put upon impulse, desire, passion - pertaining to the particular individual as such - a limitation of caprice and self-will is regarded as a fettering of Freedom. We should on the contrary look upon such limitations as the indispensable proviso of emancipation. Society and State are the very conditions in which freedom is realised.*

p. 45 Single vertical line by the side of

Besides, it is a dangerous and false prejudice, that the People alone *have reason and insight, and know what justice is; for each popular faction may represent itself as the People, and the question as to what constitutes the State is one of advanced science, and not popular decision.*

p. 50 Single vertical line by the side of

Only the rational *will is that universal principle which independently determines and unfolds its own being, and develops its successive elemental phase as organic members. Of this Gothic-cathedral architecture the ancient knew nothing.*

p. 53 Double vertical line by the side of

Freedom can exist only where Individuality is recognised as having its positive and real existence in the Divine Being. The connection may be further explained thus:- Secular existence, as merely temporal - occupied with particular interests - is consequently only relative and unauthorised; and receives its validity only in as far as the universal soul that pervades it - its principle - receives absolute validity; which it cannot have unless it is recognised as the definite manifestation, the phenomenal existence of the Divine Essence. On this account it is that the State rests on religion.

p. 54 Single vertical line by the side of

Summing up what has been said of the State, we find that we have led to call its vital principle, as actuating the individuals who compose it, - Morality. The State, its laws, its arrangements, constitute the rights of its members; its natural features, its mountains, air, and waters, are their *country, their fatherland, their outward material property; the history of the State,* their *deeds; what their ancestors have produced, belongs to them and lives in their memory. All is their possession, just as they are possessed by it; for it constitutes their existence, their being.*

p. 55. Single vertical line by the side of

Among the Athenians the word Athens had a double import; suggesting primarily, a complex of political institutions, but no less, in the second place, that Goddess who represented the Spirit of the People and its unity.

p. 56 Single word underlined in the following sentence

This peculiarity in the world of mind has indicated in the case of man an altogether different destiny from that of merely natural objects - in which we find always one and the same stable character, to which all change reverts; - namely, a real *capability for change, and that of the better, an impulse of* perfectibility.

p. 57 Single word underlined in the following sentence

The principle of Development *involves also the existence of a latent germ of being - a capacity or potentiality striving to realise itself.*

Single vertical line by the side of

That development which in the sphere of Nature is a peaceful growth, is in that of Spirit, a severe, mighty conflict with itself.

p. 62 Double vertical lines by the side of

Rationality begins to manifest itself in the actual conduct of the World's affairs (not where it is merely an undeveloped potentiality), - where a condition of things is present in which it realises itself in consciousness, will and action.

Single vertical line by the side of

Freedom is nothing but the recognition and adoption of such universal substantial objects as Right and Law, and the production of a reality that is accordant with them - the State.

p. 69 Single vertical line by the side of

And on this ground [i.e. that nobility can be found even amongst "the most savage and the most pusillanimous nations"] *a doubt has been suggested whether in the progress of history and of general culture mankind have* [sic] *become better; whether their* [sic] *morality has been increased, - morality being regarded in a subjective aspect and view, as founded on what the agent holds to be right and wrong, good and evil; not on a principle which is considered to be in and for itself right and good, or a crime and evil, or on a particular religion believed to be the true one.*

p. 70 Single vertical line by the side of

What it [i.e. "the History of the World"] *has to record is the activity of the Spirit of Peoples, so that the individual forms which that spirit has assumed in the sphere of outward reality, might be left to the delineation of special histories.*

p. 82 Single vertical line and the comment "True" by the side of

The life of a people ripens a certain fruit; its activity aims at the complete manifestation of the principle which it embodies. But this fruit does not fall back into the bosom of the people that produced and matured it; on the contrary, it becomes a poison-draught to it. That poison-draught it cannot let alone, for it has an insatiable thirst for it: the taste of the draught is its annihilation, though at the same time the rise of a new principle.

Single vertical line and a question mark by the side of

Philosophy, as occupying itself with the True, has to do with the eternally present. *Nothing in the past is lost for it, for the Idea is ever present; Spirit is immortal; with it there is no past, no future, but an essential* now.

p. 103 Single vertical line by the side of

What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the condition of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History.

p. 127 Single vertical line by the side of

Five duties are stated in the Shu-King *as involving grave and unchangeable fundamental relations. 1. The mutual one of the Emperor and people. 2. Of the Fathers and Children. 3. Of an elder and younger brother. 4. Of Husband and Wife. 5. Of Friend and Friend.*

p. 137 Double vertical line by the side of

Their consciousness of moral abandonment shews itself also in the fact that the religion of Fo is so widely diffused; a religion which regards as the Highest and Absolute - as God - pure Nothing*; which sets up contempt for individuality, for personal existence, as the highest perfection.*

p. 137 Single vertical line by the side of

But in China religion has not risen to this grade [i.e. of spiritual maturity], *for true faith is possible only where individuals can seclude themselves - can exist for themselves independently of any external power.*

p. 140 Underlining of words in the following sentence

With this deficiency of genuine subjectivity is connected moreover, the form which Chinese science *assumes.*

p. 145 Underlining of words in, single vertical line by the side of and the following marginal comment

> "Hegel quite fails to understand Chinese art. I think he makes the mistake of approaching the Chinese from an utterly hostile point of view"

on the following:

The burden which presses them [i.e. the Chinese] *to the ground, seems them to be their inevitable destiny; and it appears nothing terrible to them to sell themselves as slaves, and to eat the bitter bread of slavery. Suicide, the result of revenge, and the exposure of children, as a common, even daily occurrence, shew the little respect in which they hold themselves individually, and humanity in general. And*

though there is no distinction conferred by birth, ad every one can attain the highest dignity, this very equality testifies to no triumphant assertion of the worth of the inner man, but a servile consciousness - one which has not yet matured itself so far as to recognise distinctions.

p. 147 Double vertical line by the side of

The Indian view of things is a Universal Pantheism, a Pantheism, however, of Imagination, not of thought.

p. 168 Single vertical line by the side of and underlining of words in the following:

In India the primary aspect of subjectivity, - viz. that of the imagination, - presents a union of the Natural and Spiritual, in which nature on the one hand, does not present itself as a world embodying Reason, nor the Spiritual on the other hand, as consciousness in contrast with Nature. Here the antithesis in the [above stated] [words in brackets are Sibree's] *principle is wanting. Freedom both as* abstract *will and as* subjective *freedom is absent. The proper basis of the State, the principle of freedom is altogether absent: there cannot therefore be any State in the true sense of the term. This is the first point to be observed: if China may be regarded as nothing else but a State, Hindoo political existence present us with a people, but no* State. *Secondly, while we found a moral despotism in* China, *whatever may be called a relic of political life in* India, *is a despotism without a principle, without any rule of morality and religion (as far as the latter has a reference to human action) have as their indispensable condition and basis the freedom of the Will.*

p. 169 Single vertical line by the side of, and the following marginal comment "Prose requires greater self-consciousness than poetry" on the following

For History requires Understanding - the power of looking at an object in an independent objective light, and comprehending it in its rational connection with other objects. Those peoples therefore are alone capable of History, and of prose generally, who have arrived at that period of development, (and can make that their starting point,), at which individuals comprehend their own existence as independent, i.e. *possess self-consciousness.*

p. 170 Marginal comment

"The Hindoo lacks the sense of actuality necessary to the evolution and (perpetration?) of history."

by the side of the following:

As the Hindoo Spirit is a state of dreaming and mental transiency - a self-oblivious dissolution - objects also dissolve for it into unreal images and indefinitude.

p. 172 Following sentence underlined

The Brahmins have no conscience in respect to truth.

p. 174 Double vertical line by the side of, underlining in, and the following marginal comment

"I think this originates in the conception of human life as a mechanical and automatic organism. This neglect of individualisation won't explain and justify the ritual."

on the following passage:

If, then, in conclusion, we once more take a general view of the comparative condition of India and China, we shall see that China was characterised by a thoroughly unimaginative Understanding; a prosaic life amid firm and definite reality: while in the Indian world there is, so to speak, no object that can be regarded as real, and firmly defined, - none that was not at its first apprehension perverted by the imagination to the very opposite of what it presents to an intelligent consciousness.

p. 176 Underlining in and the marginal comment "Is "nothingness a sufficient definition?"" on the following:

The negative *form of this* [i.e. Buddhist] *elevation is the concentration of Spirit to the infinite, and must first present itself under theological conditions. It is contained in the fundamental dogma, that Nothingness is the principle of all things, - that all proceeded from and returns to Nothingness.*

p. 177 Double vertical line by the side of the following:

But while this [i.e. Buddhist] *is the* negative *form of the elevation of Spirit from the immersion in the objective to a subjective realisation of itself, this Religion also advances to the consciousness of an* affirmative *form. Spirit is also the Absolute. Yet in comprehending Spirit it is a point of essential importance in what determinate form Spirit is conceived. When we speak of Spirit as universal, we know that for us it exists only in an inward conception; but to attain this point of view, - to appreciate Spirit in the pure subjectivity of Thought and conception, - is the result of a longer process of culture. At that point in history at which we have now arrived, the form of Spirit is not advanced beyond Immediateness [*(translator's parentheses) *the idea of it is not yet refined by reflection and abstraction]. God is conceived in an immediate, unreflected form; not in the form of Thought - objectively. But this immediate Form is that of humanity. The Sun, the Stars do not come up to the idea of Spirit; but Man seems to realise it; and he, as* Buddha, Gautama, Foe - *in the form of a departed teacher, in the living from of the Grand Lama - receives divine worship.*

p. 179 Underlining in the following sentences:

The Lama's personality as such - his particular individuality - is therefore subordinate to the substantial essence which it embodies.

and

The idea never crosses the minds of the Lama-worshippers to desire of the Lama to shew himself Lord of Nature - to exercise magical and mysterious power; for from the being they call God, they look only for a spiritual activity and the bestowal of spiritual benefits.

p. 187 Underlining in the following sentence:

It is implied in this [i.e. in the teaching of the Persian Vendidad] *that man should be virtuous: his own will, his subjective freedom is presupposed.*

p. 202 Single vertical line by the side of:

[on Greek religion:] *Here, on the contrary, human pain becomes an element of worship; in pain man realises his subjectivity: it is expected of him, - he may here indulge self-consciousness and the feeling of actual existence. Life here regains its value. A universality of pain is established: for death becomes immanent in the Divine, and the deity dies.*

pp. 203-204 Single vertical line by the side of:

[of Judaism:] *Nature, - which in the East is the primary and fundamental existence, - is now depressed to the condition of a mere creature; and Spirit now occupies the first place. God is known as the creator of all men, as he is of all nature, and as absolute causality generally.*

p. 205 Single vertical line by the side of, underlining of words and the following marginal comment

"Characteristically Jewish idea in religion also Puritan sects. Santayana."

on the following passage:

With this [i.e. "walking in the way of the Lord"] *is conjoined happiness, life and temporal prosperity as its reward; for it is said: "that thou mayest live long in the land." - Here too also we have the possibility of the* historical *view; for the understanding has become prosaic; putting the limited and circumscribed in its proper place, and comprehending it as the form proper to finite existence: Men are regarded as individuals, not as incarnations of God; Sun as Sun, Mountains as Mountains, - not as possessing Spirit and Will.*

p. 215 Underlining of words in the following sentence:

[of Egyptian society:] *A plan of society that is to be adopted and acted upon, as an absolutely complete one, - in which everything has been considered, and especially the education and habituation to it, necessary to its becoming second nature, - is altogether opposed to the nature of Spirit, which makes contemporary life the object on which it acts; itself being the infinite impulse of activity to alter its forms.*

p. 216 Underlining of words in the following:

[of Egyptian isolationism:] *It is that African imprisonment of ideas combined with the infinite impulse of the spirit to realise itself objectively, which we find here.*

p. 228 Single vertical line by the side of and the following words underlined in the proceeding passage:

If, in conclusion, we combine what has been said here of the peculiarities of the Egyptian Spirit in all its aspects, its pervading principle is found to be, that the two elements of reality - Spirit sunk in Nature, and the impulse to liberate it - are here held together inharmoniously as contending elements. We behold the antithesis of Nature and Spirit, - not the primary Immediate Unity (as in the less advanced nations), nor the Concrete Unity, where Nature is posited only as a basis for the manifestation of Spirit (as in the more advanced); in contrast with the first and second of these Unities, the Egyptian Unity - combining contradictory elements - occupies a middle place. The two sides of this unity are held in abstract independence of each other, and their veritable union presented only as a problem.

p. 229 Double vertical line by the side of:

[of transition of *Geist* to the Greek world:] *All that is now needed is to posit that particular existence - which contains the germ of ideality* - as ideal, *and to comprehend the Universality itself, which is already potentially liberated from the particulars involving it. It is the free, joyful Spirit of Greece that accomplishes this, and makes this its starting-point.*

pp. 229-230 Two sets of double vertical lines by the side of, and underlining of words in the following:

That the Spirit of the Egyptians presented itself to their consciousness in the form of a problem, *is evident from the celebrated inscription in the sanctuary of the Goddess Neith at Sais:* "I am that which is, that which was, and that which will be: no one has lifted my veil"

p. 230 Underlining of words in the following:

[of Apollo's utterance of "Man, know thyself":] *In this dictum is not intended a self-recognition that regards the specialities of one's own weaknesses and defects: it is not the individual that is admonished to become acquainted with his idiosyncrasy, but humanity in general is summoned to self-knowledge.*

p. 231 Double vertical line by the side of and the following comment

"The expansion of Spirit not dependent on duration"

on the proceeding sentence:

[of why some civilisations once possessed by the *Geist* survive and others not:] *In the first place we must here banish from our minds the prejudice in favour of duration, as if it had any advantage as compared with transience: the imperishable mountains are not superior to the quickly dismantled rose exhaling its life in fragrance.*

p. 233 Single vertical line by the side of:

We have, then, to distinguish three periods in Greek history: the first, that of the growth of real Individuality; the second, that of its independence and prosperity in external conquest (through contact with the previous World-historical people); and the third, the period of its decline and fall, in its encounter with the succeeding organ of World History.

p. 244 Underlining of words in the following sentence:

[of the Greek view of nature:] *It does not maintain the position of stupid indifference to it as something existing, and there an end of it; but regards it as something in the first instance foreign, in which, however, it has presentiment of confidence, and the belief that it bears something within it which is friendly to the human Spirit, and to which it may be permitted to sustain a positive relation.*

p. 245 Double vertical line by the side of:

[on the Gods communicating with men:] *In what has been stated we have, on the*

one hand, the Indefinite, which, however, holds communication with man; on the other hand the fact, that such communication is only a subjective imagining - an explanation furnished by the percipient himself.

p. 245 Single vertical line by the side of:

Greek freedom of thought is excited by an alien existence; but it is free because it transforms and virtually reproduces the stimulus by its own operation. This phase of Spirit is the medium between the loss of individuality on the part of man (such as we observe in the Asiatic principle, in which the Spiritual and Divine exists only under a Natural form), and Infinite Subjectivity as pure certainty of itself - the position that the Ego is the ground of all that can lay claim to substantial existence.

p. 243 Single vertical line by the side of

The activity of the Spirit does not yet possess in itself the material and organ of expression, but needs the excitement of Nature and the matter which Nature supplies: it is not free, self-determining Spirituality, but mere naturalness formed to Spirituality - Spiritual Individuality.

and also by the side of

In Greek Beauty the Sensuous is only a sign, an expression, an envelope, in which Spirit manifests itself.

p. 250 Single vertical line by the side of

[on the inventions by which man "turns Nature against itself" to his own benefit:]
These human inventions belong to Spirit, and such an instrument is to be respected more than a mere natural object.

p. 251 Underlining of words in the following sentence:

The exhilarating sense of personality, in contrast with sensuous subjection to nature, and the need, not of mere pleasure, but of the display of individual powers,

in order thereby to gain special distinction and consequent enjoyment, constitute therefore the chief characteristic and principal occupation of the Greeks.

p. 252 Single vertical line by the side of:

In contrast with this kind of seriousness, [i.e. "labour that has reference to some want"] *however, Sport presents the higher seriousness; for in it Nature is wrought into Spirit, and although in these contests the subject has not advanced to the highest grade of serious thought, yet in this exercise of his physical powers, man shews his Freedom, viz. that he has transformed his body to an organ of Spirit.*

p. 253 Single vertical line by the side of:

But on the other hand, it must be observed, that the divinity of the Greeks is not yet the absolute, *free Spirit, but Spirit in a particular mode, fettered by the limitations of humanity - still dependent as a determinate individuality on external conditions.*

p. 256 Single vertical line by the side of:

That higher thought, the knowledge of Unity as God, - the One Spirit, - lay beyond that grade of thought which the Greeks had attained.

p. 258 Single vertical line by the side of:

But the Greek gods must not be regarded as more human than the Christian God.

p. 260 Single vertical line by the side of:

[of Greek religion:] *Neither human nor divine subjectivity, recognised as infinite, has as yet, absolutely decisive authority.*

p. 261 Single vertical line by the side of:

The Democratical State is not Patriarchal, - does not rest on a still unreflecting, undeveloped confidence, - but implies laws, with the consciousness of their being founded on an equitable and moral basis, and the recognition of these laws as

positive.

p. 263 Single vertical line by the side of:

Subjectivity was a grade not greatly in advance of that occupied by the Greek Spirit; that phase must of necessity soon be attained: but it plunged the Greek world into ruin, for the polity which that world embodied was not calculated for this side of humanity - did not recognise this phase; since it had not made its appearance when that polity began to exist. Of the Greeks in the first and genuine form of their Freedom, we may assert, that they had no conscience; the habit of living for their country without farther [analysis or] reflection, was the principle dominant among them.

pp. 268-269 Single vertical line by the side of:

But the leading principle that characterises this state is Political Virtue, which Athens and Sparta have, indeed, in common, but which in the one state developed itself to a work of Art, viz., Free Individuality - in the other retained its substantial form.

p. 275 Single vertical line by the side of:

This Greek morality, though extremely beautiful, attractive and interesting in its manifestation, is not the highest point of view for Spiritual self-consciousness. It wants the form of Infinity, the reflection of thought within itself, the emancipation from the Natural element - (the Sensuous that lurks in the character of Beauty and Divinity [as comprehended by the Greeks]) - and from that immediacy, [that undeveloped simplicity,] which attaches to their ethics. Self-Comprehension on the part of Thought is wanting - illimitable Self-Consciousness - demanding, that what is regarded by me as Right and Morality should have its confirmation in myself - from the testimony of my own Spirit; that the Beautiful (the idea as manifested in sensuous contemplation or conception) may also become the True - an inner supersensuous world.

p. 290 Single vertical line by the side of, and underlining of words in the following:

[Hegel has here reached the discussion of "The Roman World":] *Here, in Rome then, we find that free universality, that abstract Freedom, which on the one hand sets an abstract state, a political constitution and power, over* concrete *individuality; on the other side creates a personality in opposition to that universality, - the inherent freedom of the* abstract *Ego, which must be distinguished from individual idiosyncrasy. For Personality constitutes the fundamental condition of legal Right: it appears chiefly in the category of Property, but it is indifferent to the concrete characteristics of the living Spirit with which individuality is concerned. These two elements, which constitute Rome, - political Universality on the one hand, and the abstract freedom of the individual on the other, - appear, in the first instance, in the form of Subjectivity. This Subjectivity - this retreating into one's self which we observed as the corruption of the Greek Spirit - becomes here the ground on which a new side of the World's History arises.*

p. 323 Double vertical line by the side of:

[on the rise of the Emperors:] *In this way the world-wide sovereignty of Rome became the property of a single possessor. This important change must not be regarded as a thing of chance; it was* necessary *- postulated by the circumstances. The democratic constitution could no longer be really maintained by Rome, but only kept up in appearance.*

p. 329 Single vertical line by the side of:

[of the knowledge of philosophy amongst a wide section of the population in Rome:] *But the inward reconciliation by means of philosophy was itself only an abstract one - in the pure principle of personality; for Thought, which, as perfectly refined, made itself its own object, and thus harmonised itself, was entirely destitute of a real object, and the immobility of Scepticism made aimlessness itself the object of the Will.*

p. 331 Single vertical line by the side of:

The Greek Spirit was a consciousness of Spirit, but under a limited form, having the element of Nature as an essential ingredient.

and also

Spirit appeared as specialised in the idiosyncrasies of the genius of the several Greek nationalities and of their divinities, and was represented by Art, *in whose sphere the Sensuous is elevated only to the middle ground of beautiful form and shape, but not of pure Thought.*

p. 332 Underlining of words in the following sentences:

Outward suffering must, as already said, be merged in a sorrow of the inner man. He must feel himself as the negation of himself; he must see that his misery is the misery of his nature - that he is in himself a divided and discordant being.

p. 334 Vertical line by the side of:

implicitly and explicitly, then, we have the truth, that man through Spirit - through cognition of the Universal and the Particular - comprehends God himself.

p. 335-336 Single vertical line by the side of, and the following marginal comment
"Definition of Spirit"
on the following passage:

But what is Spirit? It is the one immutably homogeneous Infinite - pure Identity - which in its second phase separates itself from itself and makes this second aspect its own polar opposite, viz. as existence for and in self as contrasted with the Universal.

p. 336 Words underlined in the following sentence:

If Spirit be defined as absolute reflection within itself in virtue of its absolute duality - Love on the one hand as comprehending the Emotional, [Empfindung] Knowledge on the other hand as Spirit [including the penetrative and active faculties, as opposed to the receptive] - it is recognised as Triune: *the "Father" and the "Son", and that duality which essentially characterises it as "Spirit".*

Single vertical line by the side of and words underlined in the following:

Man, on the contrary, is God only in so far as he annuls the merely Natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth, and knows that he himself is a constituent [Moment] of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being: for the Natural is the Unspiritual.

p. 340 Double vertical line by the side of:

We may say that nowhere are to be found such revolutionary utterances as in the Gospels; for every thing that had been respected, is treated as a matter of indifference - as worthy of no regard.

p. 342 Double vertical line by the side of, and marginal comment "Spirit" on the following:

[commenting on the worship of Isis and Mithras:] *But the West desired a deeper, purely inward Universality - an Infinite possessed at the same time of positive qualities.*

p. 346 Single vertical line by the side of:

It was then through the Christian Religion that the Absolute Idea of God, in its true conception, attained consciousness. Here Man, too, finds himself comprehended in his true nature, given in the specific conception of "the Son". Man, finite when regarded for himself, *is yet at the same time the Image of God and a fountain on infinity* in himself. *He is the object of his own existence - has in himself an infinite value, and eternal destiny. Consequently he has his true home in the supersensuous world - an infinite subjectivity, gained only by a rupture to break their power within him.*

p. 348 Double vertical line by the side of:

The process displayed in History is only the manifestation of Religion as Human Reason - the production of the religious principle which dwells in the heart of man, under the form of Secular Freedom. Thus the discord between the inner life of the

heart and the actual world is removed. To realise this is, however, the vocation of another people - or peoples - viz., the German. *In ancient Rome itself, Christianity cannot find a ground on which it may become actual, and develop an empire.*

p. 352 Words underlined in, and the following marginal comment

"neat and meretricious way of putting things"

by the side of:

[Hegel is here commenting on the Christological controversies of the Early Christian Era:] *In the contest of the question whether Christ were homousios or homoiousios* [this is a transliteration of the text's Greek] - *that is of* the same *or of* similar *nature of God - <u>the letter i</u>* [i.e. the Greek letter iota] *<u>cost many thousands their lives.</u>*

p. 410 Double vertical line by the side of:

It [i.e. the Christianity of the Crusades:] *was practically undeceived; and the result which it brought back with it was of a negative kind: viz., that the* definite embodiment *which it was seeking, was to be looked for in* Subjective Consciousness alone, *and in no external object; that the definite form in question, presenting the union of the Secular with the Eternal, is the Spiritual self-cognisant independence of the individual. Thus the world attains the conviction that man must look within himself for that* definite embodiment *of being which is of a divine nature: subjectivity thereby receives absolute authorisation and claims to determine for itself the relation [of all that exists] to the Divine.*

p. 412 Single vertical line by the side of:

Grieved to the heart by the defeat of the Christians [i.e. in the Crusades], *the Popes again and again urged them to advance to the rescue; but lamentation and entreaties were vain, and they could effect nothing. Spirit, disappointed with regard to its craving for the highest from of the sensuous presence of Deity, fell back upon itself. A rupture, the first of its kind and profound as it was novel, took place. From this time forward we witness religious and intellectual movements in which Spirit, - transcending and repulsive and irrational existence by which it is surrounded, - either finds its sphere of exercise within itself, and draws upon its own resources for satisfaction, or throws its energies into an actual world of general and morally*

justified aims, which are therefore aims consonant with Freedom. The efforts thus originated are now to be described: they were the means by which Spirit was to be prepared to comprehend the grand purpose of its Freedom in a form of greater purity and moral elevation.

To this class of movements belongs in the first place the establishment of monastic and chivalric orders, designed to carry out those rules of life which the Church had distinctly enjoined on its members. That renunciation of property, riches, pleasures, and free will, which the Church had designated as the highest of spiritual attainments, was to be a reality - not a mere profession.

p. 428 Single vertical line by the side of, and the marginal comment "Nonsense" on the following:

These three events - the so-called Revival of learning, the flourishing of the Fine Arts and the discovery of America and of the passage to India by the Cape - may be compared with that blush of dawn, *which after long storms first betokens the return of a bright and glorious day. This day is the day of Universality, which breaks upon the world after the long, eventful, and terrible night of the Middle Ages - a day which is distinguished by science, art and inventive impulse - that is, by the noblest and highest, and which Humanity, rendered free by Christianity and emancipated through the instrumentality of the Church, exhibits as the eternal and veritable substance of its being.*

p. 431 Words underlined in and marginal note "BULL" by the side of the following:

[of the Reformation:] *The time-honoured and cherished* sincerity of the German people *is destined to effect this revolution out of the honest truth and simplicity of its heart.*

p. 438 Single vertical line by the side of, and words underlined in the following;

But what is this peculiarity of character which hindered the attainment of Spiritual Freedom? We answer: the <u>pure inwardness</u> of the German Nation was the proper soil for the emancipation of Spirit; the Romance Nations, on the contrary, have maintained in the very depth of their soul - in their Spiritual Consciousness - the principle of Disharmony*: they are a product of the fusion of Roman and German*

blood, and still retain the heterogeneity thence resulting.

p. 440 Single vertical line by the side of:

The development and advance of Spirit from the time of the Reformation onwards consists in this, that Spirit, having now gained the consciousness to its Freedom, through that process of mediation which takes place between man and God - that is, in the full recognition of the objective process as the existence [the positive and definite manifestation] of the Divine essence - now takes it up and follows it out in building up the edifice of secular relations. That harmony [of Objective and Subjective Will] which has resulted form the painful struggles of History, involves the recognition of the Secular as capable of being an embodiment of Truth; whereas it had been formerly regarded as evil only, as incapable of Good - the latter being considered essentially ultramundane. It is now perceived that Morality and Justice in the State are also divine and commanded by God, and that in point of substance there is nothing higher or more sacred.

p. 441 Words underlined in the following sentence:

In this obedience [i.e. "obedience to the laws of the State, as the Rational element in volition and action, was made the principle of human conduct"] *man is free, for all that is demanded is that the Particular should yield to the General*.

p. 442 Single vertical line and marginal "?" by the side of:

In the first instance this reconciliation [i.e. between "God and the World"] *must take place in the individual soul, must be realised by feeling; the individual must gain the assurance that the Spirit dwells in him, - that, in the language of the Church, a brokenness of heart has been experienced, and that Divine grace has entered into the heart thus broken. By Nature man is not what he ought to be; only through a transforming process does he arrive at truth. The general and speculative aspect of the matter is just this - that the human heart is not what it should be.*

p. 458 Single vertical line by the side of, words underlined in and the marginal note "God Spirit" by the side of:

Thought is the grade to which Spirit has now advanced. It involves the Harmony of Being in its purest essence, challenging the external world to exhibit the same Reason which Subject [the Ego] possesses. Spirit perceives that Nature - the World - must also be an embodiment of Reason, for God created it on the principles of Reason. An interest in the contemplation and comprehension of the present world became universal. Nature embodies Universality, in as much as it is nothing other than Sorts, Genera, Power, Gravitation, &c., phenomenally presented. Thus Experimental Science *became the science of the World; for experimental science involves on the one hand the observation of phenomena, on the other hand also the discovery of the law, the essential being, the hidden force that causes those phenomena - thus reducing the data supplied by observation to their simplest principles.*

p. 459 Twin double vertical lines by the side of:

It seemed to men as if God had but just created the moon and the stars, plants and animals, as if the laws of the universe were now established for the first time; for only then did they feel a real interest in the universe, when they recognised their own Reason in the Reason which pervades it. The human eye became clear, *perception quick, thought active and interpretative.*

Words underlined in the following sentence:

Thus all miracles were disallowed: for Nature is a system of known and recognised Laws; Man is at home in it, and that only passes for truth in which he finds himself at home; he is free through the acquaintance he has gained with Nature.

pp. 460-461 Single vertical line by the side of:

This principle of thought [i.e. the "basis of inward demonstration"] *makes its appearance in the first instance in a general and abstract form; and is based on the axiom of Contradiction and Identity.* [there is here a translator's footnote to the text, which Eliot also marks, and which is given below] *The results of thought are thus posited as finite, and the ecclairissement utterly banished and extirpated all that was speculative from things human and divine. Although it is of incalculable importance that the multiform complex of things should be reduced to its simplest conditions, and brought into the form of Universality, yet this still abstract principle does not satisfy*

the living Spirit, the concrete human soul. This formally absolute principle brings us to the last stage in History, our world, our own time.

The foot-note is as follows:

The sensational conclusions of the "materialistic" school of the 18th century are reached by the "axiom of Contradiction and Identity", as applied in this simple dilemma: "In cognition, Man is either active or passive; he is not active *(unless he is grossly deceiving himself), therefore he is* passive*; therefore all knowledge is derived* ab extra*." What this external objective being is of which this knowledge is the cognition, remains an eternal mystery* - i.e., *as Hegel says: "The results of thought are posited as finite." - TR.*

p. 462 Single vertical line by the side of the following Translator's footnote to the text *But the metaphysical process by which this abstract Will develops itself, so as to attain a definite form of Freedom, and how Rights and Duties are evolved therefrom, this is not the place to discuss.*

"Freedom of the Will", in Hegel's use of the term, has an intensive signification, and must be distinguished from "Liberty of Will" in its ordinary acceptation. The latter denotes a mere liability to be affected by extrinsic motives: the former is that absolute strength of Will which enables it to defy all seductions that challenge its persistency. Its sole object is self-assertion. In fact it is Individuality *maintaining itself against all* dividing *or distracting forces. And to maintain individuality is to preserve consistency - to "act on principle," - phrases with which Language, the faithful conservator of metaphysical genealogies, connects virtuous associations. In adopting a code of Duties, and in acknowledging Rights, the Will* recognises its own Freedom *in this intensive sense, for* in such adoption it declares its own ability *to pursue a certain course of action in spite of all inducements, sensuous or emotional, to deviate from it. These remarks may supply some indications of the process referred to in the text. - TR.*

p. 466 Single vertical line by the side of, and words underlined in the following sentence:

A constitution, therefore, was established in harmony with the conception of Right,

and on this foundation all future legislation was to be based. Never since the sun had stood in the firmament and the planets revolved around him had it been perceived that man's existence centres in his head, i.e. in Thought, inspired by which he builds up the world of reality. Anaxagorous had been the first to say that nous [i.e. mind, this is a transliteration of the Greek in the original] *governs the World; but not until now had man advanced to the recognition of the principle that Thought ought to govern spiritual reality. This was accordingly a glorious mental dawn. All thinking beings shared in the jubilation of this epoch. Emotions of a lofty character stirred in men's minds at that time; a spiritual enthusiasm thrilled through the world, as if the reconciliation between the Divine and the Secular was now first accomplished.*

End pages

The end pages of Eliot's copy of the Lectures are full of the publisher's catalogue, some of which titles Eliot has ticked. On the penultimate page of the book, there is a note which runs

"cf. Hegel and Lloyd Morgan
Emergent Evolution"

Appendix 1a -

An example of T S Eliot's underlining

Appendix 1b -

An example of T S Eliot's single vertical lining

Appendix 1c -

An example of T S Eliot's double vertical lining

Appendix 1d -

An example of T S Eliot's marginal notes

Appendix 1e -

End Note - where do we go from here?

This study was inspired by and made use of just one of Eliot's annotated texts from the Houghton Library at the University of Harvard. There are eleven more. The on-line catalogue (http://hollisweb.harvard.edu, search string COAC9.EL464.ZZ) lists the following volumes with annotations:

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9. Springarn, J E, A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, (New York: Columbia University Press: 1908 (1949 printing)).

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Any one of these potentially could be the source for further research into the mind of T S Eliot.

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